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VOL. XII.

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OH! IT IS NO WONDER!"

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Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BRIGHTENING PROSPECTS.



It was a day or two afterwards, that Mr. Gibson made time to ride round by Hamley, desirous to learn more exact particulars of this scheme for Roger than he could obtain from any extraneous source, and rather puzzled to know whether he should interfere in the project or not. The state of the case was this:—Osborne's symptoms were, in Mr. Gibson's opinion, signs of his having a fatal disease. Dr. Nicholls had differed from him on this head, and Mr. Gibson knew that the old physician had had long experience, and was considered very skilful in the profession. Still he believed that he himself was right, and, if so, the complaint was one which might continue for years in the same state as at present, or might end the young man's life in an hour—a minute. Supposing that Mr. Gibson was right, would it be well for Roger to be away where no sudden calls for his presence could reach him—away for two years? Yet if the affair was concluded, the interference of a medical man might accelerate the very evil to be feared; and after all Dr. Nicholls

might be right, and the symptoms might proceed from some other cause. Might? Yes. Probably did? No. Mr. Gibson could not bring himself to say yes to this latter form of sentence. So he rode on, meditating; his reins slack, his head a little bent. It was one of those still and lovely autumn days when the red and yellow leaves are hanging-pegs to dewy, brilliant gossamer-webs; when the hedges are full of trailing brambles, loaded with ripe blackberries; when the air is full of the farewell whistles and pipes of birds, clear and short—not the long full-throated warbles of spring; when the whirr of the partridge's wings is heard in the stubble-fields, as the sharp hoof-blows fall on the paved lanes; when here and there a leaf floats and flutters down to the ground, although there is not a single breath of wind. The country surgeon felt the beauty of the seasons perhaps more than most men. He saw more of it by day, by night, in storm and sunshine, or in the still, soft, cloudy weather. He never spoke about what he felt on the subject; indeed, he did not put his feelings into words, even to himself. But if his mood ever approached to the sentimental, it was on such days as this. He rode into the stable-yard, gave his horse to a man, and went into the house by a side entrance. In the passage he met the squire.

"That's capital, Gibson! what good wind blew you here? You'll have some lunch? it's on the table, I only just this minute left the room." And he kept shaking Mr. Gibson's hand all the time till he had placed him, nothing loth, at the well-covered dining-table.

"What's this I hear about Roger?" said Mr. Gibson, plunging at once into the subject.

"Aha! so you've heard, have you? It's famous, is it not? He's a boy to be proud of, is old Roger. Steady Roger; we used to think him slow, but it seems to me that slow and sure wins the race. But tell me; what have you heard? how much is known? Nay, you must have a glass full. It's old ale, such as we don't brew now-a-days; it's as old as Osborne. We brewed it that autumn, and we called it the young squire's ale. I thought to have tapped it on his marriage, but I don't know when that will come to pass, so we've tapped it now in Roger's honour."

The old squire had evidently been enjoying the young squire's ale to the verge of prudence. It was indeed as he said, "as strong as brandy," and Mr. Gibson had to sip it very carefully as he ate his cold roast beef.

"Well! and what have you heard? There's a deal to hear, and all good news, though I shall miss the lad, I know that."

"I did not know it was settled; I only heard that it was in progress."

"Well, it was only in progress, as you call it, till last Tuesday." He never let me know anything about it, though; he says he thought I might be sidged with thinking of the pros and cons. So I never knew a word 'untill I had a letter from my Lord Hollingford—where is it?" pulling

out a great black leathern receptacle for all manner of papers. And putting on his spectacles, he read aloud their headings.

"'Measurement of timber, new railways,' 'drench for cows, from Farmer Hayes,' 'Dobson's accounts,'—'um 'um—here it is. Now read that letter," handing it to Mr. Gibson.

It was a manly, feeling, sensible letter, explaining to the old father in very simple language the services which were demanded by the terms of the will to which he and two or three others were trustees; the liberal allowance for expenses, the still more liberal reward for performance, which had tempted several men of considerable renown to offer themselves as candidates for the appointment. Lord Hollingford then went on to say that, having seen a good deal of Roger lately, since the publication of his article in reply to the French osteologist, he had had reason to think that in him the trustees would find united the various qualities required in a greater measure than in any of the applicants who had at that time presented themselves. Roger had deep interest in the subject; much acquired knowledge, and at the same time, great natural powers of comparison, and classification of facts; he had shown himself to be an observer of a fine and accurate kind, he was of the right age, in the very prime of health and strength, and unshackled by any family ties. Here Mr. Gibson paused for consideration. He hardly cared to ascertain by what steps the result had been arrived at—he already knew what that result was; but his mind was again arrested as his eye caught on the remuneration offered, which was indeed most liberal; and then he read with attention the high praise bestowed on the son in this letter to the father. The squire had been watching Mr. Gibson—waiting till he came to this part—and he rubbed his hands together as he said,—

"Ay! you've come to it at last. It's the best part of the whole, is it not? God bless the boy! and from a Whig, mind you, which makes it the more handsome. And there's more to come still. I say, Gibson, I think my luck is turning at last," passing him on yet another letter to read. "That only came this morning; but I've acted on it already, I sent for the foreman of the drainage works at once, I did; and to-morrow, please God, they'll be at work again."

Mr. Gibson read the second letter, from Roger. To a certain degree it was a modest repetition of what Lord Hollingford had said, with an explanation of how he had come to take so decided a step in life without consulting his father. He did not wish him to be in suspense for one reason. Another was that he felt, as no one else could feel for him, that by accepting this offer, he entered upon the kind of life for which he knew himself to be the most fitted. And then he merged the whole into business. He said that he knew well the suffering his father had gone through when he had to give up his drainage works for want of money; that he, Roger, had been enabled at once to raise money upon the remuneration he was to receive on the accomplishment of his two years' work; and that he had insured his life at once, in order to provide for the repayment of

the money he had raised, in case he did not live to return to England. He said that the sum he had borrowed on this security would at once be forwarded to his father.

Mr. Gibson laid down the letter without speaking a word for some time; then he said,—

"He'll have to pay a pretty sum for insuring his life beyond seas."

"He has got his Fellowship money," said the squire, a little depressed at Mr. Gibson's remark.

"Yes; that's true. And he's a strong young fellow, as I know."

"I wish I could tell his mother," said the squire in an under-tone.

"It seems all settled now," said Mr. Gibson, more in reply to his own thoughts than to the squire's remark.

"Yes!" said the squire; "and they're not going to let the grass grow under his feet. He's to be off as soon as he can get his scientific traps ready. I almost wish he wasn't to go. You don't seem quite to like it, doctor?"

"Yes I do," said Mr. Gibson in a more cheerful tone than before. "It can't be helped now without doing a mischief," thought he to himself. "Why, squire, I think it a great honour to have such a son. I envy you, that's what I do. Here's a lad of three or four and twenty distinguishing himself in more ways than one, and as simple and affectionate at home as any fellow need to be—not a bit set up."

"Ay, ay; he's twice as much a son to me as Osborne, who has been all his life set up on nothing at all, as one may say."

"Come, squire, I must not hear anything against Osborne; we may praise one, without hitting at the other. Osborne has not had the strong health which has enabled Roger to work as he has done. I met a man who knew his tutor at Trinity the other day, and of course we began cracking about Roger—it's not every day that one can reckon a senior wrangler amongst one's friends, and I'm nearly as proud of the lad as you are. This Mr. Mason told me the tutor said that only half of Roger's success was owing to his mental powers; the other half was owing to his perfect health, which enabled him to work harder and more continuously than most men without suffering. He said that in all his experience he had never known any one with an equal capacity for mental labour; and that he could come again with a fresh appetite to his studies after shorter intervals of rest than most. Now I, being a doctor, trace a good deal of his superiority to the material cause of a thoroughly good constitution, which Osborne has not got."

"Osborne might have if he got out o' doors more," said the squire, moodily; "but except when he can loaf into Hollingford he does not care to go out at all. I hope," he continued, with a glance of sudden suspicion at Mr. Gibson, "he's not after one of your girls? I don't mean any offence, you know; but he'll have the estate, and it won't be free, and he must marry money. I don't think I could allow it in Roger; but Osborne is the eldest son, you know."

Mr. Gibson reddened; he was offended for a moment. Then the partial truth of what the squire said was presented to his mind, and he remembered their old friendship, so he spoke quietly, if shortly.

"I don't believe there's anything of the kind going on. I'm not much at home you know; but I've never heard or seen anything that should make me suppose that there is. When I do, I'll let you know."

"Now, Gibson, don't go and be offended. I am glad for the boys to have a pleasant house to go to, and I thank you and Mrs. Gibson for making it pleasant. Only keep off love; it can come to no good. That's all. I don't believe Osborne will ever earn a farthing to keep a wife during my life, and if I were to die to-morrow, she would have to bring some money to clear the estate. And if I do speak as I should not have done formerly—a little sharp or so—why, it's because I've been worried by many a care no one knows anything of."

"I'm not going to take offence," said Mr. Gibson, "but let us understand each other clearly. If you don't want your sons to come as much to my house as they do, tell them so yourself. I like the lads, and am glad to see them; but if they do come, you must take the consequences, whatever they are, and not blame me, or them either, for what may happen from the frequent intercourse between two young men and two young women; and what is more, though, as I said, I see nothing whatever of the kind you fear at present, and have promised to tell you of the first symptoms I do see, yet farther than that I won't go. If there is an attachment at any future time, I won't interfere."

"I should not so much mind if Roger fell in love with your Molly. He can fight for himself, you see, and she's an uncommon nice girl. My poor wife was so fond of her," answered the squire. "It's Osborne and the estate I'm thinking of!"

"Well, then, tell him not to come near us. I shall be sorry, but you will be safe."

"I'll think about it; but he's difficult to manage. I've always to get my blood well up before I can speak my mind to him."

Mr. Gibson was leaving the room, but at these words he turned and laid his hand on the squire's arm.

"Take my advice, squire. As I said, there is no harm done as yet, as far as I know. Prevention is better than cure. Speak out, but speak gently to Osborne, and do it at once. I shall understand how it is if he does not show his face for some months in my house. If you speak gently to him, he'll take the advice as from a friend. If he can assure you there's no danger, of course he'll come just as usual, when he likes."

It was all very fine giving the squire this good advice; but as Osborne had already formed the very kind of marriage his father most deprecated, it did not act quite as well as Mr. Gibson had hoped. The squire began the conversation with unusual self-control; but he grew irritated when Osborne denied his father's right to interfere in any marriage he might

contemplate; denied it with a certain degree of doggedness and weariness of the subject that drove the squire into one of his passions; and although on after reflection he remembered that he had his son's promise and solemn word not to think of either Cynthia or Molly for his wife, yet the father and son had passed through one of those altercations which help to estrange men for life. Each had said bitter things to the other; and, if the brotherly affection had not been so true between Osborne and Roger, they too might have become alienated, in consequence of the squire's exaggerated and injudicious comparison of their characters and deeds. But as Roger in his boyhood had loved Osborne too well to be jealous of the praise and love the eldest son, the beautiful brilliant lad, had received, to the disparagement of his own plain awkwardness and slowness, so now Osborne strove against any feeling of envy or jealousy with all his might; but his efforts were conscious, Roger's had been the simple consequence of affection, and the end to poor Osborne was that he became moody and depressed in mind and body; but both father and son concealed their feelings in Roger's presence. When he came home just before sailing, busy and happy, the squire caught his infectious energy, and Osborne looked up and was cheerful.

There was no time to be lost. He was bound to a hot climate, and must take all advantage possible of the winter months. He was to go first to Paris, to have interviews with some of the scientific men there. Some of his outfit, instruments, &c. were to follow him to Havre, from which port he was to embark, after transacting his business in Paris. The squire learnt all his arrangements and plans, and even tried in after-dinner conversations to penetrate into the questions involved in the researches his son was about to make. But Roger's visit home could not be prolonged beyond two days.

The last day he rode into Hollingford earlier than he needed to have done to catch the London coach, in order to bid the Gibsons good-by. He had been too actively busy for some time to have leisure to bestow much thought on Cynthia; but there was no need for fresh meditation on that subject. Her image as a prize to be worked for, to be served for seven years, and seven years more, was safe and sacred in his heart. It was very bad, this going away, and wishing her good-by for two long years; and he wondered much during his ride how far he should be justified in telling her mother, perhaps in telling her own sweet self, what his feelings were without expecting, nay, indeed reprobating, any answer on her part. Then she would know at any rate how dearly she was beloved by one who was absent; how in all difficulties or dangers the thought of her would be a polar star, high up in the heavens, and so on, and so on; for with all a lover's quickness of imagination and triteness of fancy, he called her a star, a flower, a nymph, a witch, an angel, or a mermaid; a nightingale, a siren, as one or another of her attributes rose up before him.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A LOVER'S MISTAKE.

It was afternoon. Molly had gone out for a walk. Mrs. Gibson had been paying some calls. Lazy Cynthia had declined accompanying either. A daily walk was not a necessity to her as it was to Molly. On a lovely day, or with an agreeable object, or when the fancy took her, she could go as far as any one; but these were exceptional cases; in general, she was not disposed to disturb herself from her in-door occupations. Indeed, not one of the ladies would have left the house, had they been aware that Roger was in the neighbourhood; for they were aware that he was to come down but once before his departure, and that his stay at home then would be but for a short time, and they were all anxious to wish him good-by before his long absence. But they had understood that he was not coming to the Hall until the following week, and therefore they had felt themselves at full liberty this afternoon to follow their own devices.

Molly chose a walk that had been a favourite with her ever since she was a child. Something or other had happened just before she left home that made her begin wondering how far it was right for the sake of domestic peace to pass over without comment the little deviations from right that people perceive in those whom they live with. Or, whether, as they are placed in families for distinct purposes, not by chance merely, there are not duties involved in this aspect of their lot in life,—whether by continually passing over failings, their own standard is not lowered,—the practical application of these thoughts being a dismal sort of perplexity on Molly's part as to whether her father was quite aware of her step-mother's perpetual lapses from truth; and whether his blindness was wilful or not. Then she felt bitterly enough that although she was sure as could be that there was no real estrangement between her and her father, yet that there were perpetual obstacles thrown in the way of their intercourse; and she thought with a sigh that if he would but come in with authority, he might cut his way clear to the old intimacy with his daughter, and that they might have all the former walks and talks, and quips and cranks, and glimpses of real confidence once again; things that her stepmother did not value, yet which she, like the dog in the manger, prevented Molly enjoying. But after all Molly was a girl, not so far removed from childhood; and in the middle of her grave regrets and perplexities her eye was caught by the sight of some fine ripe blackberries flourishing away high up on the hedge-bank among scarlet hips and green and russet leaves. She did not care much for blackberries herself; but she had heard Cynthia say that she liked them; and besides there was the charm of scrambling and gathering them, so she forgot all about her troubles, and went climbing up the banks, and clutching at her almost inaccessible prizes, and slipping down again triumphant, to carry them back to the large leaf which was to serve her as a basket.

One or two of them she tasted, but they were as vapid to her palate as ever. The skirt of her pretty print gown was torn out of the gathers, and even with the fruit she had eaten "her pretty lips with blackberries were all besmeared and dyed," when, having gathered as many and more than she could possibly carry, she set off home, hoping to escape into her room and mend her gown before it had offended Mrs. Gibson's neat eye. The front door was easily opened from the outside, and Molly was out of the clear light of the open air and in the shadow of the hall; she saw a face peep out of the dining-room before she quite recognized who it was; and then Mrs. Gibson came softly out, sufficiently at least to beckon her into the room. When Molly had entered Mrs. Gibson closed the door. Poor Molly expected a reprimand for her torn gown and untidy appearance, but was soon relieved by the expression of Mrs. Gibson's face—mysterious and radiant.

"I have been watching for you, dear. Don't go upstairs into the drawing-room, love. It might be a little interruption just now. Roger Hamley is there with Cynthia; and I've reason to think, in fact I did open the door unawares, but I shut it again softly, and I don't think they heard me. Is not it charming? Young love, you know, ah, how sweet it is!"

"Do you mean that Roger has proposed to Cynthia?" asked Molly.

"Not exactly that. But I don't know; of course I know nothing. Only I did hear him say that he had meant to leave England without speaking of his love, but that the temptation of seeing her alone had been too great for him. It was symptomatic, was it not, my dear? And all I wanted was to let it come to a crisis without interruption. So I've been watching for you to prevent your going in and disturbing them."

"But I may go to my own room, mayn't I," pleaded Molly.

"Of course," said Mrs. Gibson, a little testily. "Only I had expected sympathy from you at such an interesting moment."

But Molly did not hear these last words. She had escaped upstairs, and had shut her door. Instinctively she had carried her leaf full of blackberries—what would blackberries be to Cynthia now? She felt as if she could not understand it all; but as for that matter, what could she understand? Nothing. For a few minutes her brain seemed in too great a whirl to comprehend anything but that she was being carried on in earth's diurnal course, with rocks, and stones, and trees, with as little volition on her part as if she were dead. Then the room grew stifling, and instinctively she went to the open casement window, and leant out, gasping for breath. Gradually the consciousness of the soft peaceful landscape stole into her mind, and stilled the buzzing confusion. There, bathed in the almost level rays of the autumn sunlight, lay the landscape she had known and loved from childhood; as quiet, as full of low humming life as it had been at this hour for many generations. The autumn flowers blazed out in the garden below, the lazy cows were in the meadow beyond, chewing their cud in the green aftermath; the evening fires had just been

made up in the cottages beyond, in preparation for the husband's home-coming, and were sending up soft curls of blue smoke into the still air; the children, let loose from school, were shouting merrily in the distance, and she—Just then she heard nearer sounds; an opened door, steps on the lower flight of stairs. He could not have gone without even seeing her. He never, never would have done so cruel a thing—never would have forgotten poor little Molly, however happy he might be. No! there were steps and voices, and the drawing-room door was opened and shut once more. She laid down her head on her arms that rested on the window-sill, and cried,—she had been so distrustful as to have let the idea enter her mind that he could go without wishing her good-by; her, whom his mother had so loved, and called by the name of his little dead sister. And as she thought of the tender love Mrs. Hamley had borne her she cried the more, for the vanishing of such love for her off the face of the earth. Suddenly the drawing-room door opened, and some one was heard coming upstairs; it was Cynthia's step. Molly hastily wiped her eyes, and stood up and tried to look unconcerned; it was all she had time to do before Cynthia, after a little pause at the closed door, had knocked; and on an answer being given, had said, without opening the door,—“Molly! Mr. Roger Hamley is here, and wants to wish you good-by before he goes.” Then she went downstairs again, as if anxious just at that moment to avoid even so short a tête-à-tête with Molly. With a gulp and a fit of resolution, as a child makes up its mind to swallow a nauseous dose of medicine, Molly went instantly downstairs.

Roger was talking earnestly to Mrs. Gibson in the bay of the window when Molly entered; Cynthia was standing near, listening, but taking no part in the conversation. Her eyes were downcast, and she did not look up as Molly drew shyly near.

Roger was saying,—“I could never forgive myself if I had accepted a pledge from her. She shall be free until my return; but the hope, the words, her sweet goodness, have made me happy beyond description. Oh, Molly!” suddenly becoming aware of her presence, and turning to her, and taking her hand in both of his,—“I think you have long guessed my secret, have you not? I once thought of speaking to you before I left, and confiding it all to you. But the temptation has been too great, I have told Cynthia how fondly I love her, as far as words can tell; and she says——” then he looked at Cynthia with passionate delight and seemed to forget in that gaze that he had left his sentence to Molly half finished.

Cynthia did not seem inclined to repeat her saying, whatever it was, but her mother spoke for her.

“My dear sweet girl values your love as it ought to be valued, I am sure. And I believe,” looking at Cynthia and Roger with intelligent anxiety, “I could tell tales as to the cause of her indisposition in the spring.”

“Mother,” said Cynthia suddenly, “you know it was no such thing. Pray don't invent stories about me, I have engaged myself to Mr. Roger Hamley, and that is enough.”

"Enough! more than enough!" said Roger. "I will not accept your pledge. I am bound, but you are free. I like to feel bound, it makes me happy and at peace, but with all the chances involved in the next two years, you must not shackle yourself by promises."

Cynthia did not speak at once; she was evidently revolving something in her own mind. Mrs. Gibson took up the word.

"You are very generous, I am sure. Perhaps it will be better not to mention it."

"I would much rather have it kept a secret," said Cynthia, interrupting.

"Certainly, my dear love. That was just what I was going to say. I once knew a young lady who heard of the death of a young man in America, whom she had known pretty well; and she immediately said she had been engaged to him, and even went so far as to put on weeds; and it was a false report, for he came back well and merry, and declared to everybody he had never so much as thought about her. So it was very awkward for her. These things had much better be kept secret until the proper time has come for divulging them."

Even then and there Cynthia could not resist the temptation of saying,—*"Mamma, I will promise you I won't put on weeds, whatever reports come of Mr. Roger Hamley."*

"Roger, please!" he put in, in a tender whisper.

"And you will all be witnesses that he has professed to think of me, if he is tempted afterwards to deny the fact. But at the same time I wish it to be kept a secret until his return—and I am sure you will all be so kind as to attend to my wish. Please, *Roger!* Please, *Molly!* *Mamma!* I must especially beg it of you!"

Roger would have granted anything when she asked him by that name, and in that tone. He took her hand in silent pledge of his reply. Molly felt as if she could never bring herself to name the affair as a common piece of news. So it was only Mrs. Gibson answered aloud,—

"My dear child! why 'especially' to poor me? You know I'm the most trustworthy person alive!"

The little pendule on the chimney-piece struck the half-hour.

"I must go!" said Roger, in dismay. "I had no idea it was so late. I shall write from Paris. The coach will be at the George by this time, and will only stay five minutes. Dearest Cynthia——" he took her hand, and then, as if the temptation was irresistible, he drew her to him and kissed her. "Only remember you are free!" said he, as he released her and passed on to Mrs. Gibson.

"If I had considered myself free," said Cynthia, blushing a little, 'but ready with her repartees to the last,—"if I had thought myself free, do you think I would have allowed that?"

Then Molly's turn came; and the old brotherly tenderness came back into his look, his voice, his bearing.

"Molly! you won't forget me, I know; I shall never forget you, nor

your goodness to—her.” His voice began to quiver, and it was best to be gone. Mrs. Gibson was pouring out, unheard and unheeded, words of farewell; Cynthia was re-arranging some flowers in a vase on the table, the defects in which had caught her artistic eye, without the consciousness penetrating to her mind. Molly stood, numb to the heart; neither glad nor sorry, nor anything but stunned. She felt the slackened touch of the warm grasping hand; she looked up—for till now her eyes had been down-cast, as if there were heavy weights to their lids—and the place was empty where he had been; his quick step was heard on the stair, the front door was opened and shut; and then as quick as lightning Molly ran up to the front attic—the lumber-room, whose window commanded the street down which he must pass. The window-clasp was unused and stiff, Molly tugged at it—unless it was open, and her head put out, that last chance would be gone.

“I must see him again; I must! I must!” she wailed out, as she was pulling. There he was, running hard to catch the London coach; his luggage had been left at the George before he came up to wish the Gibsons good-by. In all his hurry, Molly saw him turn round and shade his eyes from the level rays of the westering sun, and rake the house with his glances—in hopes, she knew, of catching one more glimpse of Cynthia. But apparently he saw no one, not even Molly at the attic casement; for she had drawn back when he had turned, and kept herself in shadow; for she had no right to put herself forward as the one to watch and yearn for farewell signs. None came—another moment—he was out of sight for years.

She shut the window softly, and shivered all over. She left the attic and went to her own room; but she did not begin to take off her out-of-door things till she heard Cynthia's foot on the stairs. Then she hastily went to the toilet-table, and began to untie her bonnet-strings; but they were in a knot, and took time to undo. Cynthia's step stopped at Molly's door; she opened it a little and said,—“May I come in, Molly?”

“Certainly,” said Molly, longing to be able to say “No” all the time. Molly did not turn to meet her, so Cynthia came up behind her, and putting her two hands round Molly's waist, peeped over her shoulder, putting out her lips to be kissed. Molly could not resist the action—the mute entreaty for a caress. But in the moment before she had caught reflections of the two faces in the glass; her own, red-eyed, pale, with lips dyed with blackberry juice, her curls tangled, her bonnet pulled awry, her gown torn—and contrasted it with Cynthia's brightness and bloom, and the trim elegance of her dress. “Oh! it is no wonder!” thought poor Molly, as she turned round, and put her arms round Cynthia, and laid her head for an instant on her shoulder—the weary, aching head that sought a loving pillow in that supreme moment! The next she had raised herself, and had taken Cynthia's two hands, and was holding her off a little, the better to read her face.

“Cynthia! you do love him dearly, don't you?”

Cynthia winced a little aside from the penetrating steadiness of those eyes.

"You speak with all the solemnity of an adjuration, Molly!" said she, laughing a little at first to cover her nervousness, and then looking up at Molly. "Don't you think I have given a proof of it? But you know I've often told you I've not the gift of loving; I said pretty much the same thing to him. I can respect, and I fancy I can admire, and I can like, but I never feel carried off my feet by love for any one, not even for you, little Molly, and I am sure I love you more than——"

"No, don't!" said Molly, putting her hand before Cynthia's mouth, in almost a passion of impatience. "Don't, don't—I won't hear you—I ought not to have asked you—it makes you tell lies!"

"Why, Molly!" said Cynthia, in her turn seeking to read Molly's face, "what's the matter with you? One might think you cared for him yourself."

"I?" said Molly, all the blood rushing to her heart suddenly; then it returned, and she had courage to speak, and she spoke the truth as she believed it, though not the real actual truth.

"I do care for him; I think you have won the love of a prince amongst men. Why, I am proud to remember that he has been to me as a brother, and I love him as a sister, and I love you doubly because he has honoured you with his love."

"Come, that's not complimentary!" said Cynthia, laughing, but not ill-pleased to hear her lover's praises, and even willing to depreciate him a little in order to hear more.

"He's well enough, I daresay, and a great deal too learned and clever for a stupid girl like me; but even you must acknowledge he is very plain and awkward; and I like pretty things and pretty people."

"Cynthia, I won't talk to you about him. You know you don't mean what you are saying, and you only say it out of contradiction, because I praise him. He shan't be run down by you, even in joke."

"Well, then, we won't talk of him at all. I was so surprised when he began to speak—so——" and Cynthia looked very lovely, blushing and dimpling up as she remembered his words and looks. Suddenly she recalled herself to the present time, and her eye caught on the leaf full of blackberries—the broad green leaf, so fresh and crisp when Molly had gathered it an hour or so ago, but now soft and flabby, and dying. Molly saw it, too, and felt a strange kind of sympathetic pity for the poor inanimate leaf.

"Oh! what blackberries! you've gathered them for me, I know!" said Cynthia, sitting down and beginning to feed herself daintily, touching them lightly with the ends of her taper fingers, and dropping each ripe berry into her open mouth. When she had eaten about half she stopped suddenly short.

"How I should like to have gone as far as Paris with him," she exclaimed. "I suppose it would not have been proper; but how pleasant

it would have been. I remember at Boulogne" (another blackberry) "how I used to envy the English who were going to Paris; it seemed to me then as if nobody stopped at Boulogne, but dull, stupid school-girls."

"When will he be there?" asked Molly.

"On Wednesday, he said. I'm to write to him there; at any rate he is going to write to me."

Molly went about the adjustment of her dress in a quiet, business-like manner, not speaking much; Cynthia, although sitting still, seemed very restless. Oh! how much Molly wished that she would go.

"Perhaps, after all," said Cynthia, after a pause of apparent meditation, "we shall never be married."

"Why do you say that?" said Molly, almost bitterly. "You have nothing to make you think so. I wonder how you can bear to think you won't, even for a moment."

"Oh!" said Cynthia; "you must not go and take me au grand sérieux. I daresay I don't mean what I say, but you see everything seems a dream at present. Still, I think the chances are equal—the chances for and against our marriage, I mean. Two years! it's a long time; he may change his mind, or I may; or some one else may turn up, and I may get engaged to him: what should you think of that, Molly? I'm putting such a gloomy thing as death quite on one side, you see; yet in two years how much may happen."

"Don't talk so, Cynthia, please don't," said Molly, piteously. "One would think you did not care for him, and he cares so much for you!"

"Why, did I say I did not care for him! I was only calculating chances. I am sure I hope nothing will happen to prevent the marriage. Only, you know it may, and I thought I was taking a step in wisdom, in looking forward to all the evils that might befall. I am sure all the wise people I have ever known thought it a virtue to have gloomy prognostics of the future. But you're not in a mood for wisdom or virtue, I see; so I'll go and get ready for dinner, and leave you to your vanities of dress."

She took Molly's face in both her hands, before Molly was aware of her intention, and kissed it playfully. Then she left Molly to herself.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE MOTHER'S MANŒUVRE.

MR. GIBSON was not at home at dinner—detained by some patient, most probably. This was not an unusual occurrence; but it was rather an unusual occurrence for Mrs. Gibson to go down into the dining-room, and sit with him as he ate his deferred meal when he came in an hour or two later. In general, she preferred her easy-chair, or her corner of the sofa, upstairs in the drawing-room, though it was very rarely that she would allow Molly to avail herself of her stepmother's neglected privilege. Molly would fain have gone down and kept her father company every

night that he had these solitary meals; but for peace and quietness she gave up her own wishes on the subject.

Mrs. Gibson took a seat by the fire in the dining-room, and patiently waited for the auspicious moment when Mr. Gibson, having satisfied his healthy appetite, turned from the table, and took his place by her side. She got up, and with unaccustomed attention she moved the wine and glasses so that he could help himself without moving from his chair.

"There, now! are you comfortable? for I have a great piece of news to tell you!" said she, when all was arranged.

"I thought there was something on hand," said he, smiling. "Now for it!"

"Roger Hamley has been here this afternoon to bid us good-by."

"Good-by! Is he gone? I did not know he was going so soon!" exclaimed Mr. Gibson.

"Yes: never mind, that's not it."

"But tell me; has he left this neighbourhood? I wanted to have seen him."

"Yes, yes. He left love and regret, and all that sort of thing for you. Now let me get on with my story: he found Cynthia alone, proposed to her, and was accepted."

"Cynthia? Roger proposed to her, and she accepted him?" repeated Mr. Gibson, slowly.

"Yes, to be sure. Why not? you speak as if it was something so very surprising."

"Did I? But I am surprised. He is a very fine young fellow, and I wish Cynthia joy; but do you like it? It will have to be a very long engagement."

"Perhaps," said she, in a knowing manner.

"At any rate he will be away for two years," said Mr. Gibson.

"A great deal may happen in two years," she replied.

"Yes! he will have to run many risks, and go into many dangers, and will come back no nearer to the power of maintaining a wife than when he went out."

"I don't know that," she replied, still in the arch manner of one possessing superior knowledge. "A little bird did tell me that Osborne's life is not so very secure; and then—what will Roger be? Heir to the estate."

"Who told you that about Osborne?" said he, facing round upon her, and frightening her with his sudden sternness of voice and manner. It seemed as if absolute fire came out of his long dark sombre eyes. "Who told you, I say?"

She made a faint rally back into her former playfulness.

"Why? can you deny it? Is it not the truth?"

"I ask you again, Hyacinth, who told you that Osborne Hamley's life is in more danger than mine—or yours?"

"Oh, don't speak in that frightening way. My life is not in danger, I'm sure; nor yours either, love, I hope."

He gave an impatient movement, and threw a wine-glass off the table. For the moment she felt grateful for the diversion, and busied herself in picking up the fragments: "bits of glass were so dangerous," she said. But she was startled by a voice of command, such as she had never yet heard from her husband.

"Never mind the glass. I ask you again, Hyacinth, who told you anything about Osborne Hamley's state of health?"

"I am sure I wish no harm to him, and I dare say he is in very good health, as you say," whispered she, at last.

"Who told——?" began he again, sterner than ever.

"Well, if you will know, and will make such a fuss about it," said she, driven to extremity, "it was you yourself—you or Dr. Nicholls, I am sure I forget which."

"I never spoke to you on the subject, and I don't believe Nicholls did. You had better tell me at once what you are alluding to, for I'm resolved I'll have it out before we leave this room."

"I wish I'd never married again," she said, now fairly crying, and looking round the room, as if in vain search for a mouse-hole in which to hide herself. Then, as if the sight of the door into the store-room gave her courage, she turned and faced him.

"You should not talk your medical secrets so loud then, if you don't want people to hear them. I had to go into the store-room that day Dr. Nicholls was here; cook wanted a jar of preserve, and stopped me just as I was going out—I am sure it was for no pleasure of mine, for I was sadly afraid of sticking my gloves—it was all that you might have a comfortable dinner."

She looked as if she was going to cry again, but he gravely motioned her to go on, merely saying,—

"Well! you overheard our conversation, I suppose?"

"Not much," she answered, eagerly, almost relieved by being thus helped out in her forced confession. "Only a sentence or two."

"What were they?" he asked.

"Why, you had just been saying something, and Dr. Nicholls said: 'If he has got aneurism of the aorta his days are numbered.'"

"Well. Anything more?"

"Yes; you said, 'I hope to God I may be mistaken; but there is a pretty clear indication of symptoms, in my opinion.'"

"How do you know we were speaking of Osborne Hamley?" he asked; perhaps in hopes of throwing her off the scent. But as soon as she perceived that he was descending to her level of subterfuge, she took courage, and said in quite a different tone to the cowed one which she had been using,

"Oh! I know. I heard his name mentioned by you both before I began to listen."

"Then you own you did listen?"

"Yes," said she, hesitating a little now.

"And pray how do you come to remember so exactly the name of the disease spoken of?"

"Because I went——now don't be angry, I really can't see any harm in what I did."

"There, don't deprecate anger. You went——"

"Into the surgery, and looked it out. Why might not I?"

Mr. Gibson did not answer—did not look at her. His face was very pale, and both forehead and lips were contracted. At length he roused himself, sighed, and said,—

"Well! I suppose as one brews one must bake?"

"I don't understand what you mean," pouted she.

"Perhaps not," he replied. "I suppose that it was what you heard on that occasion that made you change your behaviour to Roger Hamley? I have noticed how much more civil you were to him of late."

"If you mean that I have ever got to like him as much as Osborne, you are very much mistaken; no, not even though he has offered to Cynthia, and is to be my son-in-law."

"Let me know the whole affair. You overheard,—I will own that it was Osborne about whom we were speaking, though I shall have something to say about that presently—and then, if I understand you rightly, you changed your behaviour to Roger, and made him more welcome to this house than you had ever done before, regarding him as proximate heir to the Hamley estates?"

"I don't know what you mean by 'proximate.'"

"Go into the surgery, and look into the dictionary then," said he, losing his temper for the first time during the conversation.

"I knew," said she through sobs and tears, "that Roger had taken a fancy to Cynthia; any one might see that; and as long as Roger was only a younger son, with no profession, and nothing but his Fellowship, I thought it right to discourage him, as any one would who had a grain of common sense in them; for a clumsier, more common, awkward, stupid fellow I never saw—to be called county, I mean."

"Take care; you'll have to eat your words presently when you come to fancy he'll have Hamley some day."

"No, I shan't," said she, not perceiving his exact drift. "You are vexed now because it is not Molly he's in love with; and I call it very unjust and unfair to my poor fatherless girl. I am sure I have always tried to further Molly's interests as if she was my own daughter."

Mr. Gibson was too indifferent to this accusation to take any notice of it. He returned to what was of far more importance to him.

"The point I want to be clear about is this. Did you or did you not alter your behaviour to Roger in consequence of what you overheard of my professional conversation with Dr. Nicholls? Have you not favoured his suit to Cynthia since then, on the understanding gathered from that conversation that he stood a good chance of inheriting Hamley?"

"I suppose I did," said she, sulkily. "And if I did, I can't see any

harm in it, that I should be questioned as if I were in a witness-box. He was in love with Cynthia long before that conversation, and she liked him so much. It was not for me to cross the path of true love. I don't see how you would have a mother love her child if she may not turn accidental circumstances to her advantage. Perhaps Cynthia might have died if she had been crossed in love; her poor father was consumptive."

"Don't you know that all professional conversations are confidential? That it would be the most dishonourable thing possible for me to betray secrets which I learn in the exercise of my profession?"

"Yes, of course, you."

"Well! and are not you and I one in all these respects? You cannot do a dishonourable act without my being inculpated in the disgrace. If it would be a deep disgrace for me to betray a professional secret, what would it be for me to trade on that knowledge?"

He was trying hard to be patient; but the offence was of that class which galled him insupportably.

"I don't know what you mean by trading. Trading in a daughter's affections is the last thing I should do; and I should have thought you would be rather glad than otherwise to get Cynthia well married, and off your hands."

Mr. Gibson got up, and walked about the room, his hands in his pockets. Once or twice he began to speak, but he stopped impatiently short without going on.

"I don't know what to say to you," he said at length. "You either can't or won't see what I mean. I am glad enough to have Cynthia here. I have given her a true welcome, and I sincerely hope she will find this house as much a home as my own daughter does. But for the future I must look out of my doors, and double-lock the approaches if I am so foolish as to—— However, that's past and gone; and it remains with me to prevent its recurrence as far as I can for the future. Now let us hear the present state of affairs."

"I don't think I ought to tell you anything about it. It is a secret, just as much as your mysteries are."

"Very well; you have told me enough for me to act upon, which I most certainly shall do. It was only the other day I promised the squire to let him know if I suspected anything—any love affair, or entanglement, much less an engagement, between either of his sons and our girls."

"But this is not an engagement; he would not let it be so; if you would only listen to me, I could tell you all. Only I do hope you won't go and tell the squire and everybody. Cynthia did so beg that it might not be known. It is only my unfortunate frankness has led me into this scrape. I never could keep a secret from those whom I love."

"I must tell the squire. I shall not mention it to any one else. And do you quite think it was consistent with your general frankness to have overheard what you did, and never to have mentioned it to me? I could have told you then that Dr. Nicholls' opinion was decidedly

opposed to mine, and that he believed that the disturbance about which I consulted him on Osborne's behalf was merely temporary. Dr. Nicholls would tell you that Osborne is as likely as any man to live and marry and beget children."

If there was any skill used by Mr. Gibson so to word this speech as to conceal his own opinion, Mrs. Gibson was not sharp enough to find it out. She was dismayed, and Mr. Gibson enjoyed her dismay; it restored him to something like his usual frame of mind.

"Let us review this misfortune, for I see you consider it as such," said he.

"No, not quite a misfortune," said she. "But certainly if I had known Dr. Nicholls' opinion——" she hesitated.

"You see the advantage of always consulting me," he continued gravely. "Here is Cynthia engaged——"

"Not engaged, I told you before. He would not allow it to be considered an engagement on her part."

"Well, entangled in a love affair with a lad of three-and-twenty, with nothing beyond his fellowship and a chance of inheriting an encumbered estate; no profession even, abroad for two years, and I must go and tell his father all about it to-morrow."

"O dear, pray say that, if he dislikes it, he has only to express his opinion."

"I don't think you can act without Cynthia in the affair. And if I am not mistaken, Cynthia will have a pretty stout will of her own on the subject."

"Oh, I don't think she cares for him very much; she is not one to be always falling in love, and she does not take things very deeply to heart. But of course one would not do anything abruptly; two years' absence gives one plenty of time to turn oneself in."

"But a little while ago we were threatened with consumption and an early death if Cynthia's affections were thwarted."

"Oh, you dear creature, how you remember all my silly words! It might be; you know poor dear Mr. Kirkpatrick was consumptive, and Cynthia may have inherited it, and a great sorrow might bring out the latent seeds. At times I am so fearful. But I dare say it is not probable, for I don't think she takes things very deeply to heart."

"Then I am quite at liberty to give up the affair, acting as Cynthia's proxy, if the squire disapproves of it?"

Poor Mrs. Gibson was in a strait at this question.

"No!" she said at last. "We cannot give it up. I am sure Cynthia would not; especially if she thought others were acting for her. And he really is very much in love. I wish he were in Osborne's place."

"Shall I tell you what I should do?" said Mr. Gibson, in real earnest. "However it may be brought about, here are two young people in love with each other. One is as fine a young fellow as ever breathed; the other a very pretty, lively, agreeable girl. The father of the young man

must be told, and it is most likely he will bluster and oppose; for there is no doubt it is an imprudent affair as far as money goes. But let them be steady and patient, and a better lot need await no young woman. I only wish it were Molly's good fortune to meet with such another."

"I will try for her; I will indeed," said Mrs. Gibson, relieved by his change of tone.

"No, don't. That's one thing I forbid. I'll have no 'trying' for Molly."

"Well, don't be angry, dear! Do you know I was quite afraid you were going to lose your temper at one time!"

"It would have been of no use!" said he, gloomily, getting up as if to close the sitting. His wife was only too glad to make her escape. The conjugal interview had not been satisfactory to either. Mr. Gibson had been compelled to face and acknowledge the fact that the wife he had chosen had a very different standard of conduct to that which he had upheld all his life, and had hoped to have seen inculcated in his daughter. He was more irritated than he chose to show; for there was so much of self-reproach in his irritation that he kept the feeling to himself, brooded over it, and allowed a feeling of suspicious dissatisfaction with his wife to grow up in his mind, which extended itself by-and-by to the innocent Cynthia, and caused his manner to both mother and daughter to assume a certain curt severity, which took the latter at any rate with extreme surprise. But on the present occasion he followed his wife up to the drawing-room, and gravely congratulated the astonished Cynthia.

"Has mamma told you?" said she, shooting an indignant glance at her mother. "It is hardly an engagement; and we all pledged ourselves to keep it a secret, mamma among the rest!"

"But, my dearest Cynthia, you could not expect—you could not have wished me to keep a secret from my husband?" pleaded Mrs. Gibson.

"No, perhaps not. At any rate, sir," said Cynthia, turning towards him with graceful frankness, "I am glad you should know it. You have always been a most kind friend to me, and I daresay I should have told you myself, but I did not want it named; if you please, it must still be a secret. In fact, it is hardly an engagement—he" (she blushed and sparkled a little at the euphuism, which implied that there was but one "he" present in her thoughts at the moment) "would not allow me to bind myself by any promise until his return!"

Mr. Gibson looked gravely at her, irresponsive to her winning looks, which at the moment reminded him too forcibly of her mother's ways. Then he took her hand, and said, seriously enough,—

"I hope you are worthy of him, Cynthia, for you have indeed drawn a prize. I have never known a truer or warmer heart than Roger's; and I have known him boy and man."

Molly felt as if she could have thanked her father aloud for this testimony to the value of him who was gone away. But Cynthia pouted a little before she smiled up in his face.

"You are not complimentary, are you, Mr. Gibson?" said she. "He thinks me worthy, I suppose; and if you have so high an opinion of him, you ought to respect his judgment of me." If she hoped to provoke a compliment, she was disappointed, for Mr. Gibson let go of her hand in an absent manner, and sat down in an easy chair by the fire, gazing at the wood embers as if hoping to read the future in them. Molly saw Cynthia's eyes fill with tears, and followed her to the other end of the room, where she had gone to seek some working materials.

"Dear Cynthia," was all she said; but she pressed her hand while trying to assist in the search.

"Oh, Molly, I am so fond of your father; what makes him speak so to me to-night?"

"I don't know," said Molly; "perhaps he's tired."

They were recalled from further conversation by Mr. Gibson. He had roused himself from his reverie, and was now addressing Cynthia.

"I hope you will not consider it a breach of confidence, Cynthia, but I must tell the squire of—of what has taken place to-day between you and his son. I have bound myself by a promise to him. He was afraid—it's as well to tell you the truth—he was afraid" (an emphasis on this last word) "of something of this kind between his sons and one of you two girls. It was only the other day I assured him there was nothing of the kind on foot; and I told him then I would inform him at once if I saw any symptoms."

Cynthia looked extremely annoyed.

"It was the one thing I stipulated for—secrecy."

"But why?" said Mr. Gibson. "I can understand your not wishing to have it made public under the present circumstances. But the nearest friends on both sides! Surely you can have no objection to that?"

"Yes, I have," said Cynthia; "I would not have had any one know if I could have helped it."

"I am almost certain Roger will tell his father."

"No, he won't," said Cynthia; "I made him promise, and I think he is one to respect a promise"—with a glance at her mother, who, feeling herself in disgrace with both husband and child, was keeping a judicious silence.

"Well, at any rate, the story would come with so much better a grace from him that I shall give him the chance; I won't go over to the Hall till the end of the week; he may have written and told his father before then."

Cynthia held her tongue for a little while. Then she said, with tearful pettishness,—

"A man's promise is to override a woman's wish then, is it?"

"I don't see any reason why it should not."

"Will you trust in my reasons when I tell you it will cause me a great deal of distress if it gets known?" She said this in so pleading a voice, that if Mr. Gibson had not been thoroughly displeased and annoyed by his previous conversation with her mother, he must have yielded to her. As

it was, he said coldly,—“Telling Roger's father is not making it public. I don't like this exaggerated desire for such secrecy, Cynthia. It seems to me as if something—more than was apparent was concealed behind it.”

“Come, Molly,” said Cynthia, suddenly; “let us sing that duet I've been teaching you; it's better than talking as we are doing.”

It was a little lively French duet. Molly sang it carelessly, with heaviness at her heart; but Cynthia sang it with spirit and apparent merriment; only she broke down in hysterics at last, and flew upstairs to her own room. Molly, heeding nothing else—neither her father nor Mrs. Gibson's words—followed her, and found the door of her bedroom locked, and for all reply to her entreaties to be allowed to come in, she heard Cynthia sobbing and crying.

It was more than a week after the incidents last recorded before Mr. Gibson found himself at liberty to call on the squire; and he heartily hoped that long before then, Roger's letter might have arrived from Paris, telling his father the whole story. But he saw at the first glance that the squire had heard nothing unusual to disturb his equanimity. He was looking better than he had done for months past; the light of hope was in his eyes, his face seemed of a healthy ruddy colour, gained partly by his resumption of out-of-door employment in the superintendence of the works, and partly because the happiness he had lately had through Roger's means, caused his blood to flow with regular vigour. He had felt Roger's going away, it is true; but whenever the sorrow of parting with him pressed too heavily upon him, he filled his pipe, and smoked it out over a long, slow, deliberate re-perusal of Lord Hollingford's letter, every word of which he knew by heart; but expressions in which he made a pretence to himself of doubting, that he might have an excuse for looking at his son's praises once again. The first greetings over, Mr. Gibson plunged into his subject.

“Any news from Roger yet?”

“Oh, yes; here's his letter,” said the squire, producing his black leather case, in which Roger's missive had been placed along with the other very heterogeneous contents.

Mr. Gibson read it, hardly seeing the words after he had by one rapid glance assured himself that there was no mention of Cynthia in it.

“Hum! I see he does not name one very important event that has befallen him since he left you,” said Mr. Gibson, seizing on the first words that came. “I believe I'm committing a breach of confidence on one side; but I'm going to keep the promise I made the last time I was here. I find there is something—something of the kind you apprehended—you understand—between him and my step-daughter, Cynthia Kirkpatrick. He called at our house to wish us good-by, while waiting for the London coach, found her alone, and spoke to her. They don't call it an engagement, but of course it is one.”

“Give me back the letter,” said the squire, in a constrained kind of

voice. Then he read it again, as if he had not previously mastered its contents, and as if there might be some sentence or sentences he had overlooked.

"No!" he said at last, with a sigh. "He tells me nothing about it. Lads may play at confidences with their fathers, but they keep a deal back." The squire appeared more disappointed at not having heard of this straight from Roger than displeased at the fact itself, Mr. Gibson thought. But he let him take his time.

"He's not the eldest son," continued the squire, talking as it were to himself. "But it's not the match I should have planned for him. How came you, sir," said he, firing round on Mr. Gibson, suddenly—"to say when you were last here, that there was nothing between my sons and either of your girls? Why, this must have been going on all the time!"

"I am afraid it was. But I was as ignorant about it as the babe unborn. I only heard of it on the evening of the day of Roger's departure."

"And that's a week ago, sir. What's kept you quiet ever since?"

"I thought that Roger would tell you himself."

"That shows you've no sons. More than half their life is unknown to their fathers. Why, Osborne there, we live together—that's to say, we have our meals together, and we sleep under the same roof—and yet—Well! well! life is as God has made it. You say it's not an engagement yet? But I wonder what I'm doing? Hoping for my lad's disappointment in the folly he's set his heart on—and just when he's been helping me. Is it a folly, or is it not? I ask you, Gibson, for you must know this girl. She has not much money, I suppose?"

"About thirty pounds a year, at my pleasure during her mother's life."

"Whew! It's well he's not Osborne. They'll have to wait. What family is she of? None of 'em in trade, I reckon, from her being so poor?"

"I believe her father was grandson of a certain Sir Gerald Kirkpatrick. Her mother tells me it is an old baronetcy. I know nothing of such things."

"That's something. I do know something of such things, as you are pleased to call them. I like honourable blood."

Mr. Gibson could not help saying, "But I'm afraid that only one-eighth of Cynthia's blood is honourable; I know nothing further of her relations excepting the fact that her father was a curate."

"Professional. That's a step above trade at any rate. How old is she?"

"Eighteen or nineteen."

"Pretty?"

"Yes, I think so; most people do; but it is all a matter of taste. Come, squire, judge for yourself. Ride over and take lunch with us any day you like. I may not be in; but her mother will be there, and you can make acquaintance with your son's future wife."

This was going too fast, however; presuming too much on the quiet-

ness with which the squire had been questioning him. Mr. Hamley drew back within his shell, and spoke in a sulky manner as he replied,—

"Roger's 'future wife!' he'll be wiser by the time he comes home. Two years among the black folk will have put more sense in him."

"Possible, but not probable, I should say," replied Mr. Gibson. "Black folk are not remarkable for their powers of reasoning, I believe, so that they have not much chance of altering his opinion by argument, even if they understood each other's language; and certainly if he shares my taste, their peculiarity of complexion will only make him appreciate white skins the more."

"But you said it was no engagement," growled the squire. "If he thinks better of it, you won't keep him to it, will you?"

"If he wishes to break it off, I shall certainly advise Cynthia to be equally willing, that's all I can say. And I see no reason for discussing the affair further at present. I have told you how matters stand because I promised you I would, if I saw anything of this kind going on. But in the present condition of things, we can neither make nor mar; we can only wait." And he took up his hat to go. But the squire was discontent.

"Don't go, Gibson. Don't take offence at what I've said, though I'm sure I don't know why you should. What is the girl like in herself?"

"I don't know what you mean," said Mr. Gibson. But he did; only he was vexed, and did not choose to understand.

"Is she—well, is she like your Molly?—sweet-tempered and sensible—with her gloves always mended, and neat about the feet, and ready to do anything one asks her just as if doing it was the very thing she liked best in the world?"

Mr. Gibson's face relaxed now, and he could understand all the squire's broken sentences and unexplained meanings.

"She is much prettier than Molly to begin with, and has very winning ways. She is always well-dressed and smart-looking, and I know she has not much to spend on her clothes, and always does what she is asked to do, and is ready enough with her pretty, lively answers. I don't think I ever saw her out of temper; but then I'm not sure if she takes things keenly to heart, and a certain obtuseness of feeling goes a great way towards a character for good temper, I've observed. Altogether I think Cynthia is one in a hundred."

The squire meditated a little. "Your Molly is one in a thousand, to my mind. But then you see she comes of no family at all,—and I don't suppose she'll have a chance of much money." This he said as if he were thinking aloud, and without reference to Mr. Gibson, but it nettled the latter gentleman, and he replied somewhat impatiently,—

"Well, but as there is no question of Molly in this business, I don't see the use of bringing her name in, and considering either her family or her fortune."

"No, to be sure not," said the squire, rousing up. "My wits had

gone far afield, and I'll own I was only thinking what a pity it was she would not do for Osborne. But of course it's out of the question—out of the question."

"Yes," said Mr. Gibson, "and if you will excuse me, squire, I really must go now, and then you'll be at liberty to send your wits afield uninterrupted." This time he was at the door before the squire called him back. He stood impatiently hitting his top-boots with his riding-whip, waiting for the interminable last words.

"I say, Gibson, we're old friends, and you're a fool if you take anything I say as an offence. Madam your wife and I did not hit it off the only time I ever saw her. I won't say she was silly, but I think one of us was silly, and it was not me. However, we'll pass that over. Suppose you bring her, and this girl Cynthia (which is as outlandish a Christian name as I'd wish to hear), and little Molly out here to lunch some day,—I'm more at my ease in my own house,—and I'm more sure to be civil, too. We need say nothing about Roger,—neither the lass nor me,—and you keep your wife's tongue quiet, if you can. It will only be like a compliment to you on your marriage, you know—and no one must take it for anything more. Mind, no allusion or mention of Roger, and this piece of folly. I shall see the girl then, and I can judge her for myself; for, as you say, that will be the best plan. Osborne will be here, too; and he's always in his element talking to women. I sometimes think he's half a woman himself, he spends so much money and is so unreasonable."

The squire was pleased with his own speech and his own thought, and smiled a little as he finished speaking. Mr. Gibson was both pleased and amused; and he smiled too, anxious as he was to be gone. The next Thursday was soon fixed upon as the day on which Mr. Gibson was to bring his womenkind out to the Hall. He thought that on the whole the interview had gone off a good deal better than he had expected, and felt rather proud of the invitation of which he was the bearer. Therefore Mrs. Gibson's manner of receiving it was an annoyance to him. She meanwhile had been considering herself as an injured woman ever since the evening of the day of Roger's departure; what business had any one had to speak as if the chances of Osborne's life being prolonged were infinitely small, if in fact the matter was uncertain? She liked Osborne extremely, much better than Roger; and would gladly have schemed to secure him for Cynthia, if she had not shrunk from the notion of her daughter's becoming a widow. For if Mrs. Gibson had ever felt anything acutely it was the death of Mr. Kirkpatrick, and, amiably callous as she was in most things, she recoiled from exposing her daughter wilfully to the same kind of suffering which she herself had experienced. But if she had only known Dr. Nicholls' opinion she would never have favoured Roger's suit; never. And then Mr. Gibson himself; why was he so cold and reserved in his treatment of her since that night of explanation? she had done nothing wrong; yet she was treated as though she were in

disgrace. And everything about the house was flat just now. She even missed the little excitement of Roger's visits, and the watching of his attentions to Cynthia. Cynthia too was silent enough; and as for Molly, she was absolutely dull and out of spirits, a state of mind so annoying to Mrs. Gibson just now, that she vented some of her discontent upon the poor girl, from whom she feared neither complaint nor repartee.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DOMESTIC DIPLOMACY.

THE evening of the day on which Mr. Gibson had been to see the squire, the three women were alone in the drawing-room, for Mr. Gibson had had a long round and was not as yet come in. They had had to wait dinner for him; and for some time after his return there was nothing done or said but what related to the necessary business of eating. Mr. Gibson was, perhaps, as well satisfied with his day's work as any of the four; for this visit to the squire had been weighing on his mind ever since he had heard of the state of things between Roger and Cynthia. He did not like the having to go and tell of a love affair so soon after he had declared his belief that no such thing existed; it was a confession of fallibility which is distasteful to most men. If the squire had not been of so unsuspicious and simple a nature, he might have drawn his own conclusions from the apparent concealment of facts, and felt doubtful of Mr. Gibson's perfect honesty in the business; but being what he was, there was no danger of such unjust misapprehension. Still Mr. Gibson knew the hot hasty temper he had to deal with, and had expected more violence of language than he really encountered; and the last arrangement by which Cynthia, her mother, and Molly—who, as Mr. Gibson thought to himself, and smiled at the thought, was sure to be a peacemaker, and a sweetener of intercourse—were to go to the Hall and make acquaintance with the squire, appeared like a great success to Mr. Gibson, for achieving which he took not a little credit to himself. Altogether, he was more cheerful and bland than he had been for many days; and when he came up into the drawing-room for a few minutes after dinner, before going out again to see his town-patients, he whistled a little under his breath, as he stood with his back to the fire, looking at Cynthia, and thinking that he had not done her justice when describing her to the squire. Now this soft, almost tuneless whistling, was to Mr. Gibson what purring is to a cat. He could no more have done it with an anxious case on his mind, or when he was annoyed by human folly, or when he was hungry, than he could have flown through the air. Molly knew all this by instinct, and was happy without being aware of it, as soon as she heard the low whistle which was no music after all. But Mrs. Gibson did not like this trick of her husband's; it was not refined she thought, not even "artistic;" if she

could have called it by this fine word it would have compensated her for the want of refinement. To-night it was particularly irritating to her nerves; but since her conversation with Mr. Gibson about Cynthia's engagement, she had not felt herself in a sufficiently good position to complain.

Mr. Gibson began,—“Well, Cynthia; I have seen the squire to-day, and made a clean breast of it.”

Cynthia looked up quickly, questioning with her eyes; Molly stopped her netting to listen; no one spoke.

“You're all to go there on Thursday to lunch; he asked you all, and I promised for you.”

Still no reply; natural, perhaps, but very flat.

“You'll be glad of that, Cynthia, shan't you?” asked Mr. Gibson. “It may be a little formidable, but I hope it will be the beginning of a good understanding between you.”

“Thank you!” said she, with an effort. “But—but won't it make it public? I do so wish not to have it known, or talked about, not till he comes back or close upon the marriage.”

“I don't see how it should make it public,” said Mr. Gibson. “My wife goes to lunch with my friend, and takes her daughters with her—there's nothing in that, is there?”

“I am not sure that I shall go,” put in Mrs. Gibson. She did not know why she said it, for she fully intended to go all the time; but having said it she was bound to stick to it for awhile; and, with such a husband as hers, the hard necessity was sure to fall upon her of having to find a reason for her saying. Then it came quick and sharp.

“Why not?” said he, turning round upon her.

“Oh, because—because I think he ought to have called on Cynthia first; I've that sort of sensitiveness I can't bear to think of her being alighted because she is poor.”

“Nonsense!” said Mr. Gibson. “I do assure you, no slight whatever was intended. He does not wish to speak about the engagement to anyone—not even to Osborne—that's your wish, too, is it not, Cynthia? Nor does he intend to mention it to any of you when you go there; but, naturally enough, he wants to make acquaintance with his future daughter-in-law. If he deviated so much from his usual course as to come calling here ——”

“I am sure I don't want him to come calling here,” said Mrs. Gibson, interrupting. “He was not so very agreeable the only time he did come. But I am that sort of a character that I cannot put up with any neglect of persons I love, just because they are not smiled upon by fortune.” She sighed a little ostentatiously as she ended her sentence.

“Well, then, you won't go!” said Mr. Gibson, provoked, but not wishing to have a long discussion, especially as he felt his temper going.

“Do you wish it, Cynthia?” said Mrs. Gibson, anxious for an excuse to yield.

But her daughter was quite aware of this motive for the question, and replied quietly,—“Not particularly, mamma. I am quite willing to refuse the invitation.”

“It is already accepted,” said Mr. Gibson, almost ready to vow that he would never again meddle in any affair in which women were concerned, which would effectually shut him out from all love affairs for the future. He had been touched by the squire’s relenting, pleased with what he had thought would give others pleasure, and this was the end of it!

“Oh, do go, Cynthia!” said Molly, pleading with her eyes as well as her words. “Do; I am sure you will like the squire; and it is such a pretty place, and he’ll be so much disappointed.”

“I should not like to give up my dignity,” said Cynthia, demurely. “And you heard what mamma said!”

It was very malicious of her. She fully intended to go, and was equally sure that her mother was already planning her dress for the occasion in her own mind. Mr. Gibson, however, who, surgeon though he was, had never learnt to anatomize a woman’s heart, took it all literally, and was excessively angry both with Cynthia and her mother; so angry that he did not dare to trust himself to speak. He went quickly to the door, intending to leave the room; but his wife’s voice arrested him; she said,—

“My dear, do you wish me to go; if you do, I will put my own feelings on one side?”

“Of course I do!” he said, short and stern, and left the room.

“Then I’ll go!” said she, in the voice of a victim—those words were meant for him, but he hardly heard them. “And we’ll have a fly from the ‘George,’ and get a livery-coat for Thomas, which I’ve long been wanting, only dear Mr. Gibson did not like it, but on an occasion like this I’m sure he won’t mind; and Thomas shall go on the box, and ——”

“But, mamma, I’ve my feelings too,” said Cynthia.

“Nonsense, child! when all is so nicely arranged too.”

So they went on the day appointed. Mr. Gibson was aware of the change of plans, and that they were going after all; but he was so much annoyed by the manner in which his wife had received an invitation which had appeared to him so much kinder than he had expected from his previous knowledge of the squire, and his wishes on the subject of his son’s marriage, that Mrs. Gibson heard neither interest nor curiosity expressed by her husband as to the visit itself, or the reception they met with. Cynthia’s indifference as to whether the invitation was accepted or not had displeased Mr. Gibson. He was not up to her ways with her mother, and did not understand how much of this said indifference had been assumed in order to countervent Mrs. Gibson’s affectation and false sentiment. But for all his annoyance on the subject, he was, in fact, very curious to know how the visit had gone off, and took the first opportunity of being alone with Molly to question her about the lunch of the day before at Hamley Hall.

"And so you went to Hamley yesterday after all?"

"Yes; I thought you would have come. The squire seemed quite to expect you."

"I thought of going there at first; but I changed my mind like other people. I don't see why women are to have a monopoly of changeableness. Well! how did it go off? Pleasantly, I suppose, for both your mother and Cynthia were in high spirits last night."

"Yes. The dear old squire was in his best dress and on his best behaviour, and was so prettily attentive to Cynthia, and she looked so lovely, walking about with him, and listening to all his talk about the garden and farm. Mamma was tired, and stopped in-doors, so they got on very well, and saw a great deal of each other."

"And my little girl trotted behind?"

"Oh, yes. You know I was almost at home, and besides—of course——" Molly went very red, and left the sentence unfinished.

"Do you think she's worthy of him?" asked her father, just as if she had completed her speech.

"Of Roger, papa? oh, who is? But she is very sweet, and very, very charming."

"Very charming if you will, but somehow I don't quite understand her. Why does she want all this secrecy? Why was she not more eager to go and pay her duty to Roger's father? She took it as coolly as if I'd asked her to go to church?"

"I don't think she did take it coolly; I believe I don't quite understand her either, but I love her dearly all the same."

"Umph; I like to understand people thoroughly, but I know it's not necessary to women. D'ye really think she's worthy of him?"

"Oh, papa"—said Molly, and then she stopped; she wanted to speak in favour of Cynthia, but somehow she could form no reply that pleased her to this repeated inquiry. He did not seem much to care if he got an answer or not, for he went on with his own thoughts, and the result was that he asked Molly if Cynthia had heard from Roger.

"Yes; on Wednesday morning."

"Did she show it to you? But of course not. Besides, I read the squire's letter, which told all about him."

Now Cynthia, rather to Molly's surprise, had told her that she might read the letter if she liked, and Molly had shrunk from availing herself of the permission, for Roger's sake. She thought that he would probably have poured out his heart to the one sole person, and that it was not fair to listen, as it were, to his confidences.

"Was Osborne at home?" asked Mr. Gibson. "The squire said he did not think he would have come back; but the young fellow is so uncertain——"

"No, he was still from home." Then Molly blushed all over crimson, for it suddenly struck her that Osborne was probably with his wife—that mysterious wife, of whose existence she was cognizant, but of whom she

knew so little, and of whom her father knew nothing. Mr. Gibson noticed the blush with anxiety. What did it mean? It was troublesome enough to find that one of the squire's precious sons had fallen in love within the prohibited ranks; and what would not have to be said and done if anything fresh were to come out between Osborne and Molly. He spoke out at once to relieve himself of this new apprehension.

"Molly, I was taken by surprise by this affair between Cynthia and Roger Hamley—if there's anything more on the tapis let me know at once, honestly and openly. I know it's an awkward question for you to reply to; but I would not ask it unless I had good reasons." He took her hand as he spoke. She looked up at him with clear, truthful eyes which filled with tears as she spoke. She did not know why the tears came; perhaps it was because she was not so strong as formerly.

"If you mean that you're afraid that Osborne thinks of me as Roger thinks of Cynthia, papa, you are quite mistaken. Osborne and I are friends and nothing more, and never can be anything more. That's all I can tell you."

"It's quite enough, little one. It's a great relief. I don't want to have my Molly carried off by any young man just yet; I should miss her sadly." He could not help saying this in the fulness of his heart just then, but he was surprised at the effect these few tender words produced. Molly threw her arms round his neck, and began to sob bitterly, her head lying on his shoulder. "There, there!" said he, patting her on the back, and leading her to the sofa, "that will do. I get quite enough of tears in the day, shed for real causes, not to want them at home, where, I hope, they are shed for no cause at all. There's nothing really the matter, is there, my dear?" he continued, holding her a little away from him that he might look in her face. She smiled at him through her tears; and he did not see the look of sadness which returned to her face after he had left her.

"Nothing, dear, dear papa—nothing now. It is such a comfort to have you all to myself—it makes me happy."

Mr. Gibson knew all implied in these words, and felt that there was no effectual help for the state of things which had arisen from his own act. It was better for them both that they should not speak out more fully. So he kissed her, and said,—

"That's right, dear! I can leave you in comfort now, and indeed I've stayed too long already gossiping. Go out and have a walk—take Cynthia with you, if you like. I must be off. Good-by, little one."

His commonplace words acted like an astringent on Molly's relaxed feelings. He intended that they should do so; it was the truest kindness to her; but he walked away from her with a sharp pang at his heart, which he turned into numbness as soon as he could by throwing himself violently into the affairs and cares of others.

The Poetry of Provincialisms.

DICTIONARIES are not generally considered very amusing. People never read them like other books. They are simply consulted and spoken of as "valuable works." In England Johnson is their name. His heavy shadow clouds them all. And yet the doctor is not always dull, as his definitions of smuggler, pensioner, pirate, will prove to any one who will turn to them in the early editions.

No amount of proof, however, will convince a British public against its will. Dictionaries can, we fear, never become popular; but terrible as is the popular idea about them, far worse is it about glossaries. They are generally supposed to stand to dictionaries as imps do to men, possessing all their bad without any of their good qualities. Dictionaries may be useful, especially in spelling polysyllabic words. But glossaries are a kind of Irish dictionary, carefully containing all words which are never used.

Yet, in spite of this prejudice, we venture to say that any one of our glossaries of provincialisms is far more amusing than ninety-nine out of a hundred novels. You cannot, of course, find plots and screaming incidents in them. But turn to Brockett's *North-Country Glossary*, and you will meet there many a North-country joke, racy of the soil, shining in his pages. Turn again to Hunter's *Hallamshire Glossary*, and you will find there a preface eloquent with true pathos at the decay of so many noble words used by Shakspeare and Milton. Read Forby's *Norfolk* and Barnes' *Dorsetshire Glossaries*, and you will find one overflowing with the poetry of the Anglian peasant, and the other with its author's own native Doric song.

To insist on the value of provincialisms would be something like insisting that Shakspeare was a great poet. Long ago has it been pointed out that the true study of a language must proceed from a study of its provincialisms. In England, with its vast numbers of dialects, many of them very imperfectly known, this is peculiarly the case. Our mixed descent is embodied in our provincialisms. Our vulgar speech, to use Shakspeare's metaphor, is a tangled chain; but every bead preserves in its amber its own origin and history. The discussion of these questions, however, is more suited for a scientific journal than a popular magazine. Our task is less laborious. We propose simply to note a few of those significant words, marked with a delicate refinement, rich with meaning, and often modulated with a soft music of their own, which are found more especially among our peasantry. We are quite aware that a large class of very different words also exists. Rightly treated, they, too, would

yield valuable results. But when Janus has two faces we prefer to look on the pleasantest. And here let us note that by provincialisms we mean both words properly so called and archaisms. It is a great misfortune that we possess no phrase like the Greek *glossa*, which comprehends both.

And the first thing that strikes us in the majority of provincialisms is that the poetry is not "fossil," as Emerson has defined the poetry of words, but alive, quick. Our peasants still speak good Old-English words pregnant with meaning. Living out of doors, their words breathe an out-of-door air. Their images are picturesque and full of life. In the Northern districts a starving man is said to be "hunger-poisoned," and people are "bone-tired." Crops when spoilt by rain are said in the Eastern counties to be "water-slain," and in Westmoreland, when they ripen well, are said to "addle well," as if a notion of working and earning were implied. In Leicestershire, a peasant will talk of a bee "kicking" him instead of stinging him, just as the Greeks used *πλῆγμα*. In Derbyshire he will say that he "feels a smell," just as in Exodus the Israelites "saw the thunderings" at Mount Sinai. Our peasantry still remain in many respects in an early stage of society. Hence they retain so many of those primitive words, language-marks, by which we may measure the flow and ebb of our language. On the other hand, our artificial life in large towns is emasculating our speech. The strong metaphor has become faded. The colour is washed out with rose-water. Like Chaucer's friar, we lisp from wantonness. How differently each grade of society speaks may be seen in the fact that in the east of London "rooms" are always advertised, towards Holborn "lodgings," but west of Regent Street nothing shorter than "apartments" would seem to let.

Most certainly the labourer now, more than any one else, "speaks the tongue that Shakspeare spake." Could he, in these days of competitive examinations, be tested in a knowledge of English, he would assuredly make more marks—we believe that is the competitive examination phrase—than the clubmen of Pall Mall and the fair dwellers in Belgravia. How many of our readers can tell offhand what "fat rascals" and "batlets" are in Shakspeare? And what did the same poet mean by a "mankind-woman," "a lad of wax," and "a thill horse?" Yet all these terms are now provincialisms, and would be recognized as such by many a North-country peasant.

Or take the later English of Milton, and we venture to say that few of our readers know precisely what Milton intended when, on the sixth day of the creation, he says,—

The grassy clods now calved;

or the meaning of "plighted" in the lines from *Comus*:—

Gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted clouds.

Some rustics of our acquaintance would answer as Mr. Brockett's old woman did when she was shown a Wycliffe's Bible, "Ay, that's the way people used to talk in my younger days, before they became so precious fine."

Nevertheless, the peasant's English is not generally appreciated. He labours just now under the imputation that in some cases the whole of his vocabulary consists of only three hundred words. This is stated not merely in public lectures and newspapers, but by such an authority as Professor Max Muller.* Of course, we should not presume to contradict a statement coming from such a source without a far more careful examination than we are able to give. Some such favoured abodes of silence may certainly exist in parts of England; but as far as our experience goes we know no such Coventries. As a rule, we believe that the peasant uses more than that number of words with reference only to his daily work. Nothing is more startling than the variety of his expressions. Rich as an Italian, he revels in diminutives—in "ing," "let," and "ock." He teems with synonyms. A Derbyshire peasant uses eight different terms for a pigsty. Turn to "hay-making" in Barnes and Lewis, and the *Teesdale Glossary*, and each process will be found to bear a different name. If, instead of repeating the hackneyed quotation about the Norman "beef" and the Saxon "cow," we would collect all the Yorkshire terms for "a beast," remembering with Shakspeare that—

The steer, the heifer, and the calf,
Are all called neat,

we should be rendering some justice to the richness of provincialisms.

The real truth is, that instead of the work of collecting provincialisms being accomplished, a great deal of it has yet to be done. Stoddart has tabulated a number of glossaries, but many of them are only so in name. Thus Warner's glossary of Hampshire is absurdly deficient. The recently printed glossaries of Berkshire and Gloucestershire are only scanty lists. Many counties possess not even them. The rich district of the Trent, and the richer district of the Derbyshire Derwent, are both unrepresented. Warwickshire, with all its local associations, still waits for its glossarist. And the "mon who stubbed up Thornaby wakste" still looks for an interpreter.

Many, too, of those glossaries, on which much labour has been expended, will still bear supplementing. A curious illustration of this occurred to ourselves when lately staying in a country village. The ground had been twice worked over by two different collectors. The later, too, had gleaned a thousand words, which his predecessor had neglected. The spot did not, therefore, seem very promising. We, however, in the course of a month bagged some hundred and fifty new specimens. This gives an average of five a day, which may be looked upon as very fair sport. We are sorry to add that an excellent clergyman

* *The Science of Language*, 1st series, 4th edition, p. 277.

and an energetic schoolmaster are committing irreparable mischief by teaching the people to read.

To illustrate, however, what we have said about the richness of provincialisms, we will take a few specimens. Over and over again the peasant uses terms for which we have no synonyms. Thus, a crop of grass is known in Devonshire as "a shear of grass," as opposed to a crop of corn. Rain in the Northern counties, when it falls perpendicularly, is said to "sile down," as if in allusion to its passing through a sieve. In the Southern counties, where oxen are used for ploughing, their shoes are called "cues" as opposed to horses' shoes, just as the Greeks sometimes seemed to have used $\chi\lambda\lambda$ in opposition to $\delta\lambda\lambda$. In the Midland districts, ears of corn when thrashed are known by the appropriate term "cavvins." For all these terms we have in our literary English no synonyms, and can only represent them in a more or less roundabout fashion. But it is in describing the phenomena of Nature that the richness of our provincialisms is fully seen. No one, perhaps, has ever walked by the side of a river without being struck by those glassy spots, those "clear eyes," as sailors would call them, which every now and then appear, especially where the current runs deep, though he has found himself tongue-tied to express the appearance. Poets have overcome the difficulty by the help of metaphors. Thus Browne, in his *Masque of Circe and Ulysses*, sings,—

Where flows Lethe without coyle,
Softly like a stream of oyle.

And Mr. Tennyson, by the same not over-pleasant image, speaks of a bay being "oily-calm." But the North-country peasant knows it by the pure Old-English word *keid*, a fountain, spring, with reference, as it were, to the clearness of a well.

Again, on gusty days, no one can have failed noticing how flaws of wind dash along the surface of a stream, marking their course by black streaks and patches. And here, as in the other case, we have no word to express the appearance. A modern pre-Raphaelite poet sings,—

Mark where the passing wind shoots javelin-like
Its skeleton shadow on the broad-backed wave.

And the description is singularly minute. Most of the poets, however, have described it as a curl upon the waters. Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher all use the same image. The former speaks of streams "curled with the cold wind," and the latter of—

Winds that fly
Over the crystal face of smoothest streams,
Leaving no curl behind them.

Mr. Tennyson falls into a somewhat similar conceit, when in the *Lotos Eaters*, he talks of "crisping ripples," and in a little early piece of the "babbling runnel crispeth." He is, however, far more happy when,

probably without knowing it, he strikes an older note. Thus in the *Lady of Shalot* he sings of—

Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever.

Now the Greeks called the phenomenon *φρίξ*, connected with *φρίσσω*, and the Romans *horror*, and it is this feeling of shuddering which Mr. Tennyson has here so truly reproduced. We have no term for the appearance in literary English. Sailors at sea name it when seen on a larger scale by the expressive term "cat's-paw." The North-country peasant, however, knows it by the name "acker," implying, as it were, a space ploughed up by the wind.

And it is especially in reference to natural objects that the real poetry of provincialisms is seen. The peasant, from his occupations, is brought into a wholesome contact with Nature. He does not enjoy only her sunshine, but her frosts and storms. His eye is trained from childhood to note each varying change of the seasons. He is the poet whom Marvell imagined, whose sun-dial is made of flowers, and whose calendar is dated by the song of birds. Take, for instance, his names of flowers. How much more beautiful is his simple term "windflower" than the scientific "*anemone*," which Tennyson's "Northern Farmer" characteristically turns into "enemies." Both mean precisely the same; yet there is the same difference between them that the master of masters, Aristotle, observed between *ροδοδάκτυλος* and *ἐρυθροδάκτυλος*. The peasant christens his flowers after their habits. In the Midland counties the common goatsbeard is his "nap-at-noon" and his "go-to-bed-at-noon," and the star of Bethlehem is his "six o'clock flower," from their closing their flowers at those times. The scarlet pimpernel, from its susceptibility to the changes of the weather, is his "shepherd's dial." The orchis is his "cuckoo-flower," because it blossoms when the cuckoo is first heard, and the arum, whose leaf is seen still earlier, is his "wake-robin." Like Hesiod, he knows the seasons by these signs. In Dorsetshire he calls the haws "the pixy-pears," which, as Mr. Barnes remarks, is scientifically true, as the whitethorn and the pear belong to the same order. Mr. Tennyson is not so accurate when, in *Aylmer's Field*, he sings of—

The pretty maretail forest, fairy pines.

Again in the Northern counties the common wild vetchling is called, from the angles of its pod, "the angle-berry." Hall was not more observant when he noted—

The thrice three-angled beech-nut shell,
Or chestnut's armed husks, or hid kernell;

nor Mr. Tennyson more true, when he sings how *Katie's* hair resembled—

In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

The peasant has, too, like his fellow in Germany, jealously preserved

all the old religious names of our flowers. We cannot any longer appreciate their beauty and their meaning, when the maiden's garland is no longer hung in our churches, nor the marigold strewed on her bier. The saint no longer protects his flower. Yet some faint echo of a religion for ever past lingers in such words as Lady's thistle, and Lady's fingers, and Lady-smocks, "all silver white," as Shakespeare sings.

He has, too, preserved for us the old names, by which Shakespeare and Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher knew the flowers. Such quaint old names as "Love lies a-bleeding," "Three faces under a hood," "Dead-men's fingers," "Sops in wine," live only in the pages of our Elizabethan dramatists, and in the mouths of our rustics.

So, too, of birds. The peasant christens them like his flowers after their habits. Novalis, who so frequently says that a poet is the truest naturalist, would have been delighted with his names. And it is the poet and the peasant who have loved to treasure up the unobserved beauties of nature. Hesiod notes the spots on the throat of the nightingale-thrush. Shakespeare counts them in the cowslip-bell. Thus their descriptions possess the highest charm—truth. And it is in this spirit of minute observation that the peasant has named his birds. You cannot translate his names. It is like Prior translating the *Nutbrown Mayde* into the ugly elegance of his *Henry and Emma*. Thus in the Northern counties the pied wagtail is the "seed-bird," from its reappearing after the winter, in March, when the barley is being sown. In the Eastern counties the cock-chaffinch is the "wheatsel-bird," from its habit of congregating in flocks about harvest time. The common woodpecker, so noticeable from its loud cry, and bright green plumage, and red head, possesses at least half-a-dozen names. Mr. Matthew Arnold has very justly praised Maurice de Guérin for speaking of the woodpecker's laugh. But the West-country peasant ages ago called it the "yaffingale," that is, the laugh-singer, and the North-countryman the "iccol" and the "haho"—names which give the echo of its cry. In the Midland counties it is the peasant's "rain-bird," and his "rain-tabberer," because its cry generally forebodes rain, like the cry of the raven of old, *κόραξ δυσθήρεα κρούων*.

It has been often brought as a reproach against words formed in a rude stage of society that they are too vague. There is some truth in the charge, but not so much as has been stated. Thus the provincial "bud-bird" of Herefordshire, the bullfinch, when translated into German, becomes the nightingale (*Sprosser-sänger*). On reflection, however, the vagueness disappears. The first bird is so called because it eats the buds, the second because it sings when they are bursting. Science, however, cannot at present afford to throw hard words at provincialisms. Too often in her nomenclature has she failed to interpret Nature, too often only given us the skeleton leaf instead of the flower. On the other hand a long list of provincialisms might be given, where by a word a whole train of associations is aroused, and the close relationship of all

things shown. Thus in the North the wryneck is called the "cuckoo-maiden," because its song foretells the cuckoo's approach; whilst in the South the tit-lark is known as the "butty-lark," or companion lark, because the cuckoo so frequently lays its eggs in that bird's nest. Again, Shakspeare has been praised for so accurately painting the martin's "procreant cradle." In the same vein, however, does the rustic, in different counties, call the long-tailed tit the "oven-bird" and the "barrel-bird," from its making a long moss and lichen-woven nest.

Again, too, it is worth noticing how our peasants have recognized in birds "the sweet sense of kindred." The hedge-sparrow is still in some parts Isaac. The red-breast, as long as the English language lasts, will have no other name than Robin, the Jean le rouge-gorge of Normandy. The house-sparrow is still in many parts Skelton's "Philip," the Philip of the Elizabethan dramatists, and of Cartwright. He is evidently so called from his chirp; and in his English provincialism you may find the true meaning of Catullus's *pipilabat*, and the key to several of his European names.

But the peasant's names for all animals are equally apt and expressive. He has wisely preserved what we have carelessly thrown away or corrupted. Thus the mole is in some counties still Shakspeare's "mould-warp," and its movements under ground are called by the good old word "yedding." In the Midland counties a small brown cantharis is known as "the sailor," the poetry of which is best seen in Emerson's description of a bee—

Sailor of the atmosphere,
Swimmer through the waves of air,
Voyager of light and noon.

The bat claims half-a-dozen names. In the Eastern counties, from its fluttering, wavering flight, it is the flittermouse, the German *Fledermaus*, Ben Jonson's—

Giddy flittermouse with leathern wings.

In the South-west it is the rere-mouse, which means exactly the same: the Old-English *hrere-mus*, from *hreran*, to flutter: after whom Titania with her fairies hunts—

Rere-mice with their leathern wings
To make my small elves coats.

In Somersetshire it is the leather-mouse, and in Devonshire the leather-bird, Ben Jonson's—

Bat, and ever a bat, a rere-mouse,
And bird of twilight.

All these names have been given from close observation, and are instinct with the poetry of truth. Dr. Adams, in the *Transactions of the Philological Society*, has shown us the beauty of the provincial names of insects, and we sincerely trust that he will extend not only the field of his observations, but give the public the benefit of his learning and taste in some more generally accessible form. The value, too, of such provincialisms

cannot from a philological point of view be overrated. The same laws that governed the word-building of the Greeks hold good with our peasantry. And Garnett has aptly shown that the Greek words for cat (*αἰλουρος*) and squirrel (*σκίουρος*) are founded on identically the same principles as those on which the Norfolk peasant formed his provincial term "lobster" for a stoat.

Again, the poetry of the peasant is conspicuous in his onomatopoeitic words. He possesses a series of imitative sounds for the cries of various animals. In the Northern counties the whinnying of a foal is represented by "wicker." Cattle are said to "blore," and sheep "rout." But there is no use in filling up a page with words which any ploughboy can give with far more native grace than we can. He is, too, in his names of birds a second Aristophanes. Thus the winchat is called from its note "eutic." And "spinc," on whose derivation so much learning has been wasted, is simply formed from the cry of the chaffinch, which in some counties is also called "pink." Many a derivation of this kind may be solved by a morning's walk in the country.

There is, too, a remarkable class of words expressive of the sounds of rain and wind, and the falling of water, used only amongst the peasantry. Thus, to express the sound that David heard—"the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees" (2 Samuel v. 24,)—the West-countryman says the wind "hoois," and the North-countryman that "it soughs." The latter word is used by Chaucer; but two modern poets have also felt its aptness and beauty. In the *Excursion*, Wordsworth sings of "the pine-wood's steady sough," and in one of his earlier poems Tennyson sings of—

The wavy swell of the soughing reeds.

And the way in which the peasant applies other onomatopoeitic words to describe natural facts, is not less remarkable. We have heard rustics say of rain and hail and streams that "they hissed," of lightning that "it fizzed again," and of the sea-foam, on a rough day, that "it frizzled again." Such expressions of course present a very shabby appearance by the side of such glorious epithets and ringing terminations as *ἤχησσα* and *πολυφλοίσβοιο* which Homer would have applied to such phenomena. But the same truth underlies both. The hissing hail of our peasants well conveys in its way what Mr. Tennyson means when in *Sir Galahad* he says:—

The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, spins from brand and mail,
But o'er the dark a glory spreads
And gilds the driving hail.

Which is exactly the same as Virgil's

Tam multa in tectis crepitans salit horrida grando.

And the hiss of the rain explains Shakspeare's "shower singing in the

wind," and Pindar's *ἐπιδυννέας ὄμβροι*. And the *fix* of the lightning is exactly equivalent to Wordsworth's expression,

I saw the crackling flashes drive.

It is easy enough to laugh. Jeffrey ridiculed Wordsworth's excellent epithet "whizzing" applied to a quoit. Doubtless its effect is poor, when compared with the majesty of

Δαυρή δὲ πλάγγῃ γίβει' ἀργυροῖσι βίοιο.

But then the poet is describing, not a God shooting with a silver bow, but a dalesman hurling a quoit. And so our peasant's expressions of "flazing," and "frizzeling," and "hissing," when applied to the grand and awful manifestations of nature, at first sight appear ridiculous. But there are two ways of treating a subject. The poets themselves shall answer. Our first quotation shall be from Fletcher, who makes a madman say—

Blow, blow, thou west wind,
Blow till thou rive, and make the sea run roaring,
I'll hiss it down again with a bottle of ale.

The next shall be from Shelley's *Alaster* :

A pine,
Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast
Yielding one only response, at each pause
In most familiar cadence with the howl,
The thunder, and the hiss of homeless streams.

Here the peasant's expression comes out in all its full force.

The peasant's metaphors, too, are redolent with poetry. In the Midland counties he talks of "the winter of the blackthorn," meaning the rough cold weather which visits us early in April, when the earliest blackthorn-blossom is mingled with the latest snows. So, too, autumn is still "the fall," so aptly used by Tennyson in his *Northern Farmer*, and the end of life is the "sere of life," Shakespeare's "sere and yellow leaf." In Yorkshire it is "the chair-day." And of all the metaphors upon old age which Aristotle has given us in his *Poetics*, and which industrious commentators have piled up in the notes, none is more striking. In some counties the latter part of the day is the "edge of dark," which is doubly beautiful when applied to the end of life, "the going home," as it is called in Yorkshire. In some respects provincialisms form the unwritten poetry of a nation. They contain the germs of poems. Thus in the North-western counties the peasant talks of "a plume of trees." Marvell showed his taste and sense of beauty by setting the expression in his verse,

Upon its crest, this mountain grave,
A plume of aged trees does wave.

Mr. Ruskin has been rightly praised for applying such a bold yet true metaphor as "arm-holes" to those pits which are scooped under the branches at the point where they leave the tree. The same praise should

not be refused to the North-countryman who talks of "the clough" of the tree, literally the valley, the cleft, where the branches part. The peasant's terms are full of grace. Water-lilies in the North are "water-bells," and corn-ears in Northamptonshire are "corn-bells." The moon, in Devonshire, does not change, but "tines," that is, closes her light, just in the same way that Shelley says she "swoons." In Derbyshire the wind, when it eddies into any nook, is said to "bosom in;" and a mountain-range, which encloses a valley, to "wing round" it. In Yorkshire old wood pierced with holes is termed "bee-sucken." Evening, in the Eastern counties, is called "crow-time," from the rooks then flocking homeward. In the North ponds are said to be "mossed over," when covered with Shakspeare's "green mantle of the stagnant pool." You may cull posies of such words.

In fact, the phrases of our old poets now linger only in the mouths of our peasants. The echo of Piers Plowman's voice still rings not so very far off from his own Malvern Hills. The proverbs in Chaucer may still be met in the North. Shakspeare's flowers are still, in his native county, called by the names which he called them. Ben Jonson's "knots," or "buddings of the spring," are not forgotten in Devonshire. Milton's "rathe primrose" is still understood in Wiltshire. In the Northern counties his "spring," for a grove, and his "swink't labourer," are both known; whilst in Oxfordshire the shepherd still tells his "tale" of sheep, and in Northamptonshire—

The star that bids the shepherd fold,

is still known as "the shepherd's lamp."

These things prove at least the strength and stability of the English language, and the affectionate feelings with which the peasant clings to those homely sounds which his forefathers used. But many of our most expressive terms are fast dying. That fine word, "knoll," used with such effect by the Queen to Theseus in the *Two Noble Kinsmen*—

Remember that your fame

Knolls in the ear o' the world,

retains its charm only, perhaps, among our Roman Catholic peasantry. Shakspeare's "herb o' grace" is in many parts sadly corrupted, and hardly recognizable under the form "herby-grass." Some have altogether perished. Fletcher's "Lady-gloves," that is, fox-gloves, "le gant de Notre Dame," are lost. Day by day, too, they will go. As schools are built and schoolmasters increase, so will the old-world words perish in the struggle with the new. We say, schoolmasters, for the old village dame was in herself a chronicle of word-lore. Yet so it must be. The wheel of necessity crushes words like all other things to pieces. They, too, are governed by the law which evolves progress out of destruction.

In the meantime, however, it is pleasant to go forth into some of the quiet nooks which may be found in the Midland and Northern counties, and hear such primitive-sounding words as "bell-house" for tower;

"wall-root" for the bottom of a wall, "hand-stocking" for mitten, "nail-passer" for gimlet, and "overtune" for the burden of a song ;—to come upon, as in Devonshire, such a primitive word as "gusan-chick" for gosling, or, as in Gloucestershire, "furse-pig" for hedgehog—Shakespeare's hedge-pig. Pleasant indeed is it in these days to escape from the flash of the fast novelist and the slang of the pressman, and meet such good Old-English plurals as "peazen" for peas, and "been" for bees, and "shoon" for shoes, used by Keats.

Such words have an antique grace of their own. They smack of Eld. We hardly require Aristotle to refute Bryso, and to insist on the necessity of employing apt and beautiful words. Words are, in fact, the colours by which an author paints his pictures. And the colour which he uses betrays the man. In our day the exigencies of science, of commerce, the requirements of modern life, the new thoughts, the new feelings, to which progress gives birth, are in one sense expanding, and in another restricting, the meaning of words. Our language requires both enriching and purifying. And we can best do this by drawing on our rich mines of dialects. They still fortunately furnish us with an armoury by which we may hold our own against all the hideous hybridisms which are invading us.

No one needs to be told how much the translation of the Bible, and Shakespeare, have done to arrest the decay of home-sprung words. And one of the few healthy signs of the day in literature, is the manner in which Mr. Tennyson has drawn from the common well of vulgar speech. His early poems were marked by a delicate use of provincialisms, some of which we have quoted. The power was again seen in the *Idylls of the King*, but is most conspicuous in his last work. We speak not of the genuine Lincolnshire dialect of the *Northern Farmer*, but of *Aylmer's Field*, where provincialisms would at first sight seem out of place. Yet to them the descriptive passages owe some of their chief beauties. Thus we read of cottages which in late summer—

Were parcel-bearded with the traveller's joy,
In autumn parcel ivy-clad.

The Elizabethan poets used the word "parcel" in the same way, and some thirty years ago various attempts were made to revive it ; but except in a technical sense, we believe it is now restricted to the lower orders. Again Mr. Tennyson has rightly poached the word "conies" from the same class. He has, too, re-introduced the good old common name for kestrel, and with a touch of nature tells how Sir Aylmer pauses—

For about as long
As the wind-hover hangs in balance.

Every one who has ever watched the kestrel hanging poised in the air, perhaps above some field-mouse, knows the truthfulness of the name, which finds a parallel in the Welsh "*cudyll y gwint*." Mr. Ruskin somewhere speaks about "swallows leaning against the wind," but the pro-

vincial name of the kestrel is quite as vivid as that description. With it may be compared another local name, "stand-gale," and also "crutch-tail," formerly applied to a kite, both equally descriptive of the birds. But Mr. Tennyson has yet more to tell us about the habits of hawks. For instance, take the following landscape, when Sir Aylmer's hall is pulled down—

And the broad woodland parcelled into farms,
And where the two contrived their daughter's good
Lies the hawk's cast.

The last word we know well as a Lincolnshire term for the pellets of indigestible food which owls and hawks throw up. In the High Peak of Derbyshire the more expressive term "hawk's-cud" is used.

We will not stop over the words "burr," for the seed-vessel of the burdock, used by Shakespeare; nor "Martin's summer," also used by Shakespeare; nor "pock-pitten," though we perhaps like the form "pock-fretten" better—all of them used with a poet's nice sense of fitness. We will rather dwell on the picture of Leoline and Edith, how

With her he dipt
Against the rush of the air in the prone swing,
Made blossom-ball or daisy chain.

Blossom-ball, if it be not a provincialism, of which we are not sure, is evidently formed after the West-country "cowslip-ball," the "tisty-tosty ball" of Dorsetshire and Somersetshire, which children yearly make. Ben Jonson uses a somewhat similar word for the downy globe of the dandelion, and sings that Earine's footstep is so light that it will not bend a blade of grass,

Nor shake the downy blow-ball from his stalk.

Again, take the picture of Sir Aylmer, who—

When dawn
Aroused the black republic on his elms,
Sweeping the froth-fly from the fescue brush'd
Thro' the dim meadow.

"Fescue," though a Romance word, and formerly in common use, is now decidedly a provincialism, and we have to thank Mr. Tennyson for restoring us the castaway. "Froth-fly" we do not remember to have met as a provincialism. It sounds like one, and is more expressive than the common word "brock." If it be Mr. Tennyson's own coinage, we must congratulate him on forming a word so true in its analogy.

We think that we have now shown, as far as a slight sketch would permit, not only the vigour and the life that colour our provincialisms, but also how in the hands of a poet they may be made to yield fresh beauty. Many of them still wait to be taken up. The requirements of science will absorb some. The special use of "forecast," a term which never died out in the Midland counties, with reference to the weather, is a good instance how a forgotten word may be rendered serviceable. But

science, as a rule, makes her own words. To the poet must the care of our provincialisms be left. He alone possesses the instinct to perceive which must be kept, which rejected. And he must choose them, on the one hand, from no sentimental feeling; nor, on the other, from any Dryadist prejudice, but simply because he finds them the most expressive and the most beautiful. If he chooses them from any other reason he will only be the resurrectionist, instead of the Prometheus of words. Clare, for instance, possessed a far wider knowledge of provincialisms than Mr. Tennyson, but he knew not how to make a proper use of his riches. His verse is consequently only encumbered by them, and has sunk from the high purposes of poetry to become simply an object of interest to the philologist and the county historian.

And never had we more need of fresh life and vigour in our poetry than at the present moment. Our Muses have emigrated from the woody heights of Parnassus and the springs of Hippocrene into Mayfair. Poetry, instead of being an oak of the forest, nurtured by the wind and the rain, is now a plant forced in the hot air of drawing-rooms. The manliness of tone, which so stamped itself upon our Elizabethan dramatists, seems in danger of dying. Those great poets mixed with the crowd, wrestled with a thousand ills, and throve upon misfortunes, which would overwhelm the modern minstrel. One was a brick-mason, one a parish-clerk, and the greatest the son of a butcher. Their plays are full of life, of its stern trials, such as the poor only know, reflect man's passions and joys and aspirations, and above all, are written in strong homely English. And yet upon mere words poetry of course does not depend. You may use the most beautiful words, as a limner the most beautiful colours, and still produce only a daub. For poetry comes only out of a high, earnest life, purified by discipline, and fortified by reason in the essential goodness of things, and then comes only at those rare intervals when

Our great good parts put wings into our souls.

The Shoddy Aristocracy of America.

Show me the fortunate man, and the Gods I forget in a moment.—SCHILLER.

SOMEWHERE on this broad earth can always be found fit prototypes of the most wildly-conceived heroes and heroines of the fairy-tales. There are little Jacks in our day subduing giants quite as formidable as those of the time of the great Blunderbore. The genii Steam and Electricity are offering seven-league boots and listening-caps to old and young; and bean-stalk ladders are springing up at the feet of the restless Jacks whom fortune favours. The age has its drowsy Gullivers and its wide-awake Lilliputians, its Sinbads, big with adventure, and its "army of faithful believers," tilting at everything. There are still Pussies-in-Boots faithfully serving my lord the Marquis of Carabas; daughters spinning weary threads from distaffs never growing less; social harps which at last cry "Master!" and waken terrible ogres, and inquisitive wives vainly trying to re-polish the tell-tale key. We have Blue Beards, with sheathed scimitars, grimly extending their matrimonial relations; and sister Annies ever watchful of another's needs. There are Sleeping Beauties, alas! by the thousand; and fair ones with golden locks for whom princes and poets struggle. There are beasts, too, whom we learn to love, after we have entered their rose-lit sanctuaries; and monsters who have sung—

Fee! fo! fum!

I smell the blood of an Englishman!

There are Strong-backs who bear the world's burdens, and Hop-o'-my-Thumbs who contrive to slip its responsibilities; maidens whose tongues shed dangerous vipers, and maidens whose words are a shower of roses and pearls. Proud sisters are every day being humbled; and patient Cinderellas dropping the slipper that shall win them the prince. Foolish old couples are wasting their "wishes" on black-pudding; and wise younger ones are finding the "treasure of life" in each other. There are saintly, ministering Red Riding-hoods, and—heaven save the mark! grandams, with very big eyes and ears, eager to devour them. Men and women are still sighing for the waters of perpetual youth; and duenna-dragons are guarding enchanted and enchanting maidens. There are Ali Babas and envious Cassims; sham oil-merchants and avenging Morgianas; wicked but lucky pedlars and tailors, like those in the tales of the brothers Grimm, and Aladdins with very wonderful lamps indeed!

And here, after drifting down the stream of fairy lore, we cast anchor;

for it is with these pedlers and tailors and Aladdins that we have to deal. In short, at the risk of mixing the metaphor, I propose to "strike oil," the oil that fills the Aladdin-lamps of our own matter-of-fact day, when men cry *Cui bono?* to everything, and expect title-deeds to castles in the air.

The discerning reader need not be told the name of this oil; nor that the tailors and pedlers alluded to, with their fleet-winged geese and magic packs, are the so-called Shoddy contractors of the land of Stars and Stripes.

Verily, it is true. Here in this far land, wherein I write, the wildest tales of fairy chroniclers are rivalled by every-day experience. What are the exploits of Ali Baba compared with the discoveries of those who first said 'Open Sesame' to the caves of Cali Fornia, and other geological misers? And what was good Mrs. Cassim's zeal compared with that of the indefatigable Want-to-get-rich of modern days? Then, when the caves were opened, how everybody rushed in, some coming out richly-laden, and some finding themselves (metaphorically) drawn and quartered, like poor Cassim! But why tell an old story? There is newer material for fairy work than this. There are these tailors and pedlers and Aladdins at whom all America is just now gazing with distended eyes, wondering at the new palaces flashing into existence, at the streams of wealth flowing into startled pockets, at the presto-touch changing ragged clowns into dazzling gentlemen, and above all, at the fearful 'spell' being cast upon American life by these strange creatures, lifted, as it were by enchantment, into sudden wealth and importance.

We shall consider the pedlers and tailors, i.e. the Shoddy contractors, first. 'Shoddy' according to one Simmonds—whom both Worcester and Webster use as a cat's-paw in handling the ugly dissyllable—is "a fibrous material obtained by 'devilling' refuse woollen goods, old stockings, rags, &c. It differs from 'mungo,'" he says, "in being of an inferior quality, and is spun into yarn with a little fresh wool, and made into coarse cloth, druggit, padding, and other articles."

So say the lexicographers. But in this fast age yesterday's dictionary is almost as much out of date as yesterday's newspaper. In the world's great book of synonyms we find that Shoddy has been given a far wider signification. If Liszt, in his *Life of Chopin*, can devote pages to the explanation of the Polish word *zal*, we should require volumes to fairly describe the (now) American word 'Shoddy.' It means pretence, vulgarity, assumption, the depth of folly and the highest altitude of the ridiculous; also gilded ignorance, mock patriotism, wire-pulling, successful knavery, swindling, nay treason itself. On the other hand, it implies innocent good luck, reward of merit, and the miraculous and sudden appearance (in the newly-rich man) of super-intelligence and all the cardinal virtues. It means vast expectations in hovels and discomfort in palaces; hippoo-birds, wretched with *real* golden crowns, the secret envy of hippos with the comfortable yellow crest common to hippoodom. It

means gorgeous affluence in the son, and bare penury in the father. It *will* mean ignorant dismay in the son at the scornful superiority of the grandson—and grandsons who will feebly ignore the name and character of the founder of their illustrious house.

And this word, with its varied meanings and strong significance, has been raised to its present altitude by no less a lever than the great American rebellion.

Now a great rebellion calls for two things—men to carry it on, and men to resist it; and these, whatever may be their several patriotic aspirations, their valour and enthusiasm, must be fed, clothed, and equipped. Their respective governments, having no time to lose, stand on the “outer wall” of circumstance, and call loudly for the vendors of food, clothing, and ammunition to draw near. Honest industry hears the call, and prepares to answer it as far as conscience and means will allow. Mean-time enterprise, whether honest or not, pricks up its ears—“Hallo! here’s luck! country in trouble—wants something in a hurry—no time to examine—little down-hearted, I see—no harm in cheating the Government.” And the consequence is, a CONTRACT made so very advantageously to the Treasury Department that honest merit sighs, says, “I can’t afford to go in,” and settles down to the old routine.

The fortunate contractor at once buys up all the floating “poor stuff” at home and abroad; and his minions, with their sub-contracts, fatten themselves like vampires on the poor serving-women of the land. Then come immense supplies of army clothing—flannel under-shirts, made of “human creatures’ lives,” and blankets and uniforms of veritable “shoddy.” The armies march forth in gallant array. Soon follow innumerable catastrophes like that described by an observing troubadour of 1861:—

“March!” said the Colonel, “forward march!”
Crack went the seams in halves!
A hundred steps—a hundred men
Showed just two hundred calves!”

Notwithstanding this sad event, confiding officials still trust to the shoddy garments. They fade, and rip, and burst apart, and drop to pieces, but the contractor feels secure. His fortune is made, let the soldiers shiver and curse as they may. What are a few thousand poorly-clad men to him? He is comfortable in his “marble halls.”

Then come the pedlers with their packs—everything by this time valued at an exorbitant rate—for must not the army be fed and equipped? With lying tongues and exultant hearts they present their wares. The inspectors are in a hurry; in fact, their eyes are dim with war-smoke. Everything is “passed”—leaky tents, glued shoes, mouldy oats, hickory beef, rusty pork, poor muskets, and worse ammunition. Broken-down horses and donkeys are transmuted (on paper) into war-steeds and mules; and leaky, unseaworthy tugs, yclept “vessels” by Shoddy, are sold at fabulous prices for the pursuit of nimble privateers, and the safe trans-

portation of the country's defenders! The Treasury grows lean, but, like *Mynheer Von Dunderland*, the pedler-contractors grow fat. They count their gains in hundreds and thousands and millions; they thrive and feast and are merry, while their victims—they who feel the real weight of their iniquity—are cheated of their soldier-death, and must fall, in swarms, from the effects of insufficient shelter, bad food, and positive poison.

Of course there are marked exceptions to these contracts and contractors; but that they are exceptions (or were so at the beginning of the war) none can doubt.

When a great nation, overgrown with the mosses of peace, is stirred and shaken, like a huge rock on the way-side, we all know what squirming, slimy things run forth helter-skelter; how they wriggle and reach and burrow; how nimble and eager and greedy they are; and how they fatten on the disturbed *débris*. But when the sunshine peers in among them, and freshening winds play about the old foundation, these slimy things soon disappear amid the chirp and hum of a better activity. This sunny-breezy state of things is now prevailing at the North; but there are crowded graves east and west—in the Shenandoah Valley, on the green banks of the Potomac, and the sunny slopes of Virginia—on which the Shoddy contractors dare not look; and homes, the very atmosphere of which should stifle them.

If there are Shoddy sinners, there are also Shoddy saints; men who, having committed no wrong, find themselves suddenly very "well off:" contractors, too, some of them, who fulfil their part like good Christians, and strange to say, make money by that same. A certain class of lucky inventors, inspired speculators, sudden-rise-of-property men, and men who have "struck oil" or gambled successfully in stocks, make up the rest of the ranks of Shoddy; and strange, motley ranks they are, swelled by the consequences and requirements of the Civil War into a formidable body indeed.

Shoddy has its shibboleth, but it is difficult to detect it amid the din of the times. It is *en mascarade*, and therefore not always easily recognized. It has changes of surface like the chameleon, and stages of development rivalling the wonders of the polliwig. It can darken the very air around, and yet, like Peter Schlemil, it has far more "substance" than shadow. Full of mysteries and contradictions, how shall we detect it?

Shoddy minces its words with anxious attention; Shoddy puffs forth slang with a recklessness unparalleled. Shoddy carelessly jingles its wealth and invites mankind to come and see; Shoddy clutches its gains with the sleepless vigilance of the miser. Villainous Shoddy rises to a foam of sparkling benevolence; virtuous Shoddy, like the rat in the stable, preaches industry to the starving, from a pulpit of cheese. Shoddy sinners dose in the best pews on Sunday; Shoddy saints stay at home, paralysed by their sudden good fortune. Shoddy merchants stand well

"on the street;" and Shoddy merchants dodge the sheriff round the corner. In fact, there is scarcely a form of human antithesis in which this same Shoddy does not shine supreme: and we in turn bemoan it, laugh at it, despise it, envy it, insult it, and flatter it. We warn our children against its example, and sedulously emulate its display in our own humble manner. We cry, "Lord, be merciful unto these miserable sinners," even while we long to be able, in some mysterious and consecrated way, to go and do likewise. We sneer at Mrs. O'Flaggerty's immense diamond, and conceive an intense dissatisfaction concerning the "mean little stone" that once had power to gladden our hearts. In fact I am afraid, if Shoddy be absurd we are foolish; if Shoddy be sinful we are without charity; but let that pass—what we have to deal with now is the serpent itself, not the community that, "charmed" and scotching by turns, is in danger of writhing within its folds.

Nothing could be a greater mistake than to consider Shoddy as an invariable synonym for recently acquired riches. Men are frequently to be found who cast no reproach on sudden prosperity, but rather exalt good fortune by accepting it. These can hardly be called Shoddy, though their entire wealth come in a day. Neither, of course, can those be so classed who, by inheritance, fall from the bare limb of "good family" into the warm nest of plenty; nor those whose honest gains, long withheld, are unexpectedly rendered to them *en masse*. The lines are wire-drawn, and yet the practical distinction to a close observer is as broad as the day.

When you see, as I have seen, a coarse-visaged, angular female, dressed—or rather covered—in the very extreme of the mode, weighted with velvet, silk, and sparkling jewels, and hear her exclaim, "Lor'! expense ain't no manner of consequence to us!" you will undoubtedly detect a taint of Shoddy in the air. When you hear an "honored citizen" boasting, in bad English, of his well-known wealth and general can't-be-beat-iveness, you will know that Shoddy is not far away. When you enter a magnificent mansion, redolent of newness and fashion, and search in vain, amid the gorgeous upholstery, showy frescoes, and mongrel adornment, for the trailing home-flowers of elegance and repose, be sure that 'Shoddy' is written on the wall.

Sometimes a mere glance, or tone, or footfall, will betray the presence of Shoddy, or a comment on life, science, art, music, or literature will proclaim it as from the house-top, though you may have passed its legions, unaware, in the street. In brief, to really comprehend Shoddy, you must see its home, hear its conversation, and observe its actions, note its tastes and desires and aspirations. Then, and not until then, you can say, "This is Shoddy"—and ~~This is~~ *This is* Shoddy," with the force of a Delphic decision.

Meantime it may be gratifying to know that the deponent, having valiantly penetrated its recesses, can offer certain personal testimony which may be of interest. No matter how or why these glimpses were obtained. Enough to say, "I have been there to see."

Never shall I forget my first *entrée* into those hallowed precincts ! We were a party of four—two ladies and two gentlemen—who, in consequence of receiving a gold-lettered invitation to Mrs. G——'s grand reception, had on the appointed evening proceeded in state to her showy residence on the Fifth Avenue, New York—which avenue, by the way, is believed by "the Shoddy" to lead to heaven direct.

Our "dressing-room" experiences were peculiar, and suggestive of strange scenes to follow ; but being, as we believed, well endowed with the repose of the Vere de Veres, we descended toward the scene of action, with a tranquil consciousness of being in every way equal to the occasion. At the very foot of the stairway we were accosted by no less personages than the hostess herself, and her "grown up" daughter. The latter looked pale and anxious ; but the mother, gorgeous in an intensely blue silk, and a huge coronet of pink and purple artificial flowers, evidently felt no misgivings. Both stared at us unconditionally. Suddenly a light illumined the countenance of the elder lady, as she broke forth in a loud, emphatic tone—

"Well, I declare ! Mrs. D. and Mr. E ! How do you do ? And Miss E. ! glad to see you, I'm sure ; but the lights and everything dazzles me so, I don't hardly *know* people. Miry, my dear, this is Mr. E. and Mrs. D., both kind friends of your Pa, and Mr. E.'s daughter." (Aside to me :) "Who did you say the other gentleman was ? Oh, yes ! Mr. Stevens ! Glad to see *you*, sir, you may depend. Young gentlemen are so scarce. Couldn't hardly get up the party for it. The war, you see, takes the best of 'em off. Oh, excuse me—ha ! ha ! I didn't mean no offence ! But every young gentleman at a party counts *one*—don't they, Miry ? "

"Lor' ! Ma !" simpered Miss G., blushing violently. Here Mr. Stevens, always superbly master of himself, gracefully hastened to the rescue, and in a moment Myra was laughing the girlish laugh which, thank heaven ! even Shoddy cannot make unmusical.

"Dear me !" sighed the matron pathetically, without offering to allow us to pass into the drawing-rooms, "they've been pouring in thick as syrup all the evening ! I'm so exhausted I can't hardly stand up."

Then followed a painful silence. Through the arched rosewood doorway we could see the gaily-dressed throng within—a sea of blue, pink, and white, in which frantic creatures in black broadcloth and white neckties seemed to be insanely bobbing and whirling. Suddenly the music ceased. The waves heaved violently a moment, then parted like a Dead Sea, crested with gauze and gossamer, while an army of Israelites, bearing silver trays laden with ices, passed safely through the temporary opening.

"Gracious !" exclaimed the hostess at last, with an apologetic start, "I ought to take you in. Miry," she added, nodding her head sideways toward us, as she spoke—"you must introduce them."

"Oh, mother," was the *soto voce* reply, "I can't do it—I feel too used up."

"Yes, you must"—very austere—"I shan't do it."

Instinctively our devoted band, feeling that this "introduction" was inevitable, glanced at each other to ascertain whether any especial peculiarity rendered us unrepresentable; but we were faultless.

Myra pouted, and looked toward the animated sea aforesaid, as if contemplating a suicidal plunge.

"*Myra Jane!*" pursued the now irate mother, "do as I tell you, miss, and stop putting on airs!"

The refractory daughter was conquered. "Well, mother," she replied in a stage whisper, "I'll do it all together, but I can't introduce 'em *separate*."

Thus encouraged, we humbly followed the young lady, and after being presented in a most novel and remarkable manner to the staring mermaids and mermen, we found ourselves slowly drifting toward an anchorage in the glittering saloon.

Young faces were there, radiant with intense enjoyment; older faces, with a startled, puzzled look upon them, as though the unaccustomed scene wrought more anxiety than pleasure; hard faces varnished with a mastic smile; soft, uninterpretable faces which were either saintly or horribly vicious; and faces without any expression at all.

Meantime the violins, being "under treatment," were relieving themselves by sundry melancholy squeaks. Groups of gentlemen, who seemed to have recently been presented with their hands and feet, were making desperate efforts to appear at ease. Neglected dames were sublime in a wretched nonchalance. Portly individuals in watch-chains were glancing uneasily at matrons whose coiffures rivalled the Hanging Gardens of Babylon; and youths and maidens, all, apparently, more or less afflicted with the dance of St. Vitus, were chatting merrily together. Of these I cannot say that—

Their voices, low with fashion,
Not with feeling, softly freighted
All the air about the windows
With elastic laughers sweet.

In truth—"an' pity 'tis, 'tis true"—shrill tones, positive guffaws, and giggling responses, rather predominated over the murmurs suggestive of a pleasant evening at the Lady Geraldine's; and when the music floated forth once more, there was a rush, among the dancers, for "places," that would have been quite impossible in the days—

When persons of fashion and taste,
In dresses as stout as chain armour of old,
The parties of Ranelagh graced.

Shall I describe the dancing or the dresses? No! it is enough to say of the former that I have seen nothing precisely like it elsewhere; nor can my imagination find its prototype in the revel of bacchante, faun, or fairy. It was not wholly ungraceful, nor at all unconventional. It was just Shoddy, simple, uncompromising Shoddy, as foreign in its fulgure to the New York of four years ago as the dance of Eastern Hourri, or South

Sea Islander. Of the dresses there might be much to say, were this a fashion article, or a low-tariff essay bearing upon foreign importations. As it is neither, I will simply affirm that, with but a few exceptions, bad taste and money seemed to have vied with each other as to whose power should predominate.

We had quite lost sight of our amiable hostess, and were contemplating a dignified retreat to the dressing-rooms above, when we saw that lady bearing toward us under full sail. There were costly laces floating about her expansive shoulders, and glittering bracelets upon her roseate arms: still there was something so grotesque in her manner and appearance that we were forced to risk the Scylla of an alarming gravity, in order not to fall into the Charybdis of an uncontrollable smile. A pang of rebuke smote me, however, when her ladyship, in a tone of genuine interest, whispered,—

"You look kind o' lonesome, Mrs. D.; 'fraid you ain't enjoyin' yourself?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," I answered, with the ardent imbecility with which persons usually perpetrate social fibs.

"Ain't you danced?" (with a look that said, "If people dare to slight you here, just let me know.")

"Thank you! I really would prefer ——"

"Nonsense! Come along! I ain't a-going to have no wall-flowers in this company. I want to introduce you to a gentleman from Washington—monstrous rich!" (she added in an intense whisper) "made a hundred and ninety-five thousand dollars in the last two months!"

It was in vain to resist. I remember a huge Titan in dancing-master attire—a flabby, villanous countenance—diamonds flashing from the centre of a wall of ruffled linen—an atmosphere heavy with pomade—and an avalanche of "excuse me marns" following sundry accidents to my attire, and innumerable heartrending desertions and escapades during the progress of "The Lancers." Beyond this my impressions are vague and unsatisfactory. In fact, there are many things connected with the occasion that I would "willingly let die," not excepting the monstrous rich gentleman himself.

Before the evening was over, I found myself in a smaller apartment, gorgeously furnished and rendered truly remarkable by the abominable showily-framed paintings which nearly covered the walls. A human quartette was seated upon the sofa, à la Kenwig, and it needed no second look to convince me that I saw the four children of our hostess. Feminine treble and masculine base were represented there in equal parts, but that effect was purely a matter of faith, as nothing in their faces betrayed that they had ever uttered a sound.

Then the mother appeared. "Lor! Mrs. D., you here? Well, I had to get out of the parlors for a minute—it's so suffocating there. This is our dandy sitting-room. Ellen, stick in your shoulder, miss!" (This last was a dramatic aside directed to the sofa department). "I see you're

looking at the paintin's. Well, we *have* got lots of them, that's certain. I tell Mr. G. we'll have a picture-gallery before we know it—ha! ha!—but that's nothing—for the man's bound to have everything that money can buy —”

(Here a radiant, satisfied ripple of expression ran across the quartette upon the sofa).

I tried to say something, but alas! the allusion to the possible art-gallery had jeopardized my gravity to such an extent that I could only cough pathetically.

“This 'ere big picture,” pursued Mrs. G., “is a *landscape*—a *landscape* by—children! who is this *landscape* by?”

“Mr. Benson,” they all answered in a breath, closing their mouths instantly like four traps.

“Yes, Mr. Benson. He's a Western man, Mrs. D., and don't charge more'n a quarter what these New York painters ask. He paints pretty, tho'. Ain't that white fence *too* natural?” she added, letting her head drop sideways with its weight of admiration.

Alas, the fence *was* too natural, but I did not trust myself to say so. I merely bowed and stared vacantly at an ideal work representing, as I suspected, Cupid and Psyche, since the blue damsel depicted therein balanced a huge butterfly upon her shoulder, and her youthful companion had the inevitable wings and quiver of the mischievous God of Love.

“*That* picture,” broke forth Mrs. G., standing in superb disdain beside me, “ain't *my* taste—Mr. G. bought it. It's a fancy piece you see—Cupid and—children! what did your Pa say *was* the name of this picture?”

“Cupid and *Per-sitch*!” answered the two elder ones simultaneously.

“Oh, yes, Cupid and *Persitch*. But, Mrs. D., you must look at our portraits—we've had one artist for a year past doing all our family. Here's Mr. G. and me. You *may* think the yellow gloves in my picture ain't mates—any one might—but they are—the artist was bound to put one of them “in shadder,” in spite of all I could say. This is Dan'el's picture (sit up strait, Dan'el, and let go your sister's sash); it's like him, all but the hair. The naughty boy” (looking severely at Daniel) “burnt off one side of his curls last week, and we had to cut off the rest. Here's our youngest, Tommy—the end one on the sofa there—most beautiful boy! Always just as sassy and lively as you see him in the picture—ain't it like him, Mrs. D.?” And, following the example of Lord Obatham, on a certain well-known occasion, Mrs. G. “paused for a reply.”

Shade of Polonius, pity me! Tommy was a blue, moist-skinned little fellow, who looked as if he were in a state of chronic-somnambulism. What could I do but falter, “Very like,” without venturing to take a second look at the original?

“Mr. Benson said he never seen a harder child to paint,” resumed Mrs. G.; “it was so difficult to get his expression.” (Alack! I should think it would have been *very* difficult.) “He took him at first with only one shoe on, and the other layin' on the carpet; but I wasn't going to

have a child of mine lookin' like that: so I made Mr. Benson alter it quick. I told him to just change the shoe on the carpet to a kitten, or something of that kind, and then to put good Balmorals on the poor child. It's bad enough to have your young ones looking like wild about the house, without having their likeness took all in a muss! This is Katy."

(At this moment I saw, with a mingled feeling of mirth and apprehension, Mr. Stevens and Miss E. enter the "setting-room.")

"I had Ellen, here," continued Mrs. G. (halting before a remarkably pigeon-breasted specimen of high art), "taken correct in everything but her chest. I ordered Mr. Benson to make that high, because the poor child is so awful flat that it would only worry her father and me to see it hangin' before us all the time. Besides, Ellen's going to Dr. Lewis's what-you-call-it? Children! what's the name of Dr. Lewis's place?"

"Gym-naz-jum!" replied the sofa, promptly.

"Ah, yes, gym-naz-jum, that's it. Well, she's going there reg'lar after this, and Dr. Lewis says it'll soon fetch her chest out perfect."

Oh! the agony, to me, of this protracted interview—the consciousness of being watched by that unpitying, fun-loving pair—the convulsive laughter deep in my very heart as my good-natured chaperon led me from one masterpiece of artistic abomination to another! There were a few other persons in the apartment, all speaking at once, their voices mingling strangely with the rise and fall of the music surging through the mansion—but I dared not look upon them as the irrepressible mother talked on.

"Here is something now that you *must* see" (pointing to an execrably painted waterfall, resembling a combination of green calves'-foot jelly and gingerbread). "*This* picture is my daughter Miry's work—ain't it beautiful? but do you know, her *real* talent is *figger-paintin'*—that's her talent! I showed Mr. Benson (the one that does all our pictures, except the frames—*they* come from Gonpil's)—I showed him *this* picture, and told him that Miry's teacher said she had great talent for painting, and, says he, 'Madam, if your daughter *has* a talent for art, it *must* be for figger-paintin'—he told me just from looking at that waterfall!' she added, triumphantly.

It is possible that by this time my expression had become idiotic, or, at least, blank. Mrs. G. evidently felt that further elucidation was required.

"Figger-paintin'," she continued, raising her voice to a didactic pitch, "is paintin' of figgers and animals, you know; that's what the artists call it—figger-paintin'"—laying down the information with a patronizing emphasis.

"Ah!" I ventured.

"Yes, Mr. Benson, being a painter, could put his finger right on Miry's talent—'it *must* be, madam,' says he, 'it *must* be it's——' heavens! Ellen Ann! catch Dan'el!"

This startling peroration was caused by an eccentric movement of the child Daniel, who, having fallen asleep, upright, upon the sofa, was

announcing, by a preliminary pantomime, his intention of shortly precipitating himself upon the floor. Fortunately, Ellen Ann was equal to the emergency. "Dan'el's" precious nose was saved, and the youth restored to partial wakefulness by means of a brisk maternal shaking.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. G., becoming suddenly conscious that, though art may be "long, time is fleeting," "I ought to be in the parlor with the company. What *will* folks think of me? Dear me! what a bother!" So saying, the lady vanished in a glimmer of blue, purple, and pink.

Those last significant words were echoed in my brain again and again that night, during the wakeful hours that followed my introduction into "Shoddy" society. Poor Mrs. G.! what will folks think of her? What a bother! what a bother!

A full and faithful record of the manners and customs of Shoddy—of its histories, thoughts, feelings, and deeds—would constitute in bulk a formidable rival to the completed catalogue of the British Museum. We have had space to afford but a glance into the home of one of the lucky "pedlers." As for the "tailors," with their fleet-winged geese, "we could, an' if we would," tell much of them—but meantime the genii of the lamp are waiting. We must move onward. Come with me to the chief domain of the great uncle magician, he who fills the thousand lamps which Aladdins uncounted are now rubbing in bewildered delight. You will be surprised to learn what a noisy, dirty, crazy-looking place it is.* The good old Quaker who named the State which encloses it would lift his hands in horror at the sight. Squalid and tumbled-down, yet at the same time a very wilderness of newness, with its swarming population, with its sheds, hovels, improvised hotels, and unsightly new houses, it appears to have been conjured by the magician during a severe fit of nightmare. For miles and miles, crowds of derricks rear their heads in every direction. Engines, bound to the spot, are puffing and labouring—engines, on distant rail-tracks, screeching beneath an invisible laah as they hurry away with their burdens, and huge blackened reservoirs are pouring forth torrents of wealth. Near by are the bluffs, sitting like Memnons guarding the rivers of oil beneath. Big with the secrets of ages, they lean forward as if humanity had at last awakened their interest. Sometimes a great tongue of flame darting upward, as if to lap coolness from the clouds, tells us that an oil-spring has been accidentally set on fire. Miles of carts, groaning like living things, wriggle their way through the heavy mud, led on by patient horses and swearing men. Women in motley attire, anxious to buy impossible wares, run out to meet the occasional dray of the itinerant grocer or market-man. Dirty boys, with the flutter of possible wealth in their rags, bully the scions of "recent arrivals," or anxiously hang around "dad" as he sinks the great shaft "on shares" with McConnaky. Truly "Oil Creek" presents a strange

* Oil Creek, Venango Co., Pennsylvania.

scene, and all its wildness and oddity culminates in its metropolis—an hour-conjured city, jutting everywhere with contrarieties. Desolate and crowded, neglected and thriving, abject and enterprising, ruinous in aspect, yet grand with invisible golden domes, is Oil City—and above and around all floats the breath of the great magician, stifling and nauseous to unconverted mortals, yet like a glorious incense to the pilgrims who bow down and worship him.

Verily the city is worthy of its name. Everything is oil. The one long, crooked, bottomless street glistens black with an amiable admixture of mud and oil. The shanties and houses are oily. Oily derricks stand in the back yards; and men with their thousands "in bank" walk the oily planked side-walk in garments covered with oil. Oil-boats, laden with oil, float sleekly past on the oil-covered river. Even the dogs and horses are oily; and the little fish, crowding under the oily shore, find themselves pickled like sardines before they know it. There are oily shops where the very wrapping-paper breaks out in transparent eruptions, and oily banks, attended by oily cashiers, where oily money is deposited as the product of oil. There is oil in the very atmosphere you breathe, oil in the water you drink, and a mysterious unctious about your daily fare. The inhabitants "talk oil," too, until your senses are in danger of slipping away from you. Then, again, oil is the one great social leveller. Good "blood" is at a discount, and a derrick can lift to the plane of the highest. Your teamster yesterday may be your Rothschild to-day; and your neighbour, no matter how detestably vulgar in speech and manner he may be, can snub you with a successful "drill." If he has "struck oil," and you have not, local ethics will exalt him, and defy you to prove your superiority.

This is the head-quarters of the great magician. Of course, like other magicians, he has been for ages popping up in all sorts of unexpected places, but it was here that he first touched the rock for the benefit of modern Aladdins. They were rough, homespun fellows, ignorant and wretchedly poor, for their lands had barely yielded a subsistence. One would have thought them just the men to venture desperately into the jewelled cave. But no; "ready cash" was too tempting. Nearly every man of them sold his lamp to the highest bidder, and left for more fertile quarters. Consequently the genii of wealth and enterprise were soon, as all the world knows, serving new masters.

One of these Aladdins, however, had an adopted mother, a shrewd old soul whom we will call the widow McGannon—catch her selling the lamp! No, she rubbed it, and rubbed it, and every day the genii brought her, first gold, then "green backs;" she stewed the treasure away in every nook and cranny of her tumble-down shanty, until it could hide no more. This was all very well. But, one day, the old lady was trying to light her fire; the rusty stove had been troublesome of late, harbouring some spite, it seemed, to the green wood that had been cast aside in loading rafts for Pittsburgh. This day there was a great spluttering and

hissing when the wood went in, but no blaze. In her dilemma the old lady poured, from a bucket, some of the great magician's oil upon it, when presto! the demons of flame sprang forth! In vain the widow McGannon screamed and struggled—they never let go their wreathing hold upon her until she and her money were parted for ever!

To descend to more literal English, this old lady had recently drawn a will making her adopted son Tommy sole heir. For fifteen years past the young gentleman had been content to do odd jobs in the village, diverting himself in the meantime with toad-stinking and "making of little mud pies;" now he collected the treasure so carefully hidden behind board, rafter, and beam, and proceeded to investigate his affairs in earnest.

Half of the original farm had been sold by the widow at the commencement of the oil fever. The remainder she had prudently divided, and leased, on shares, to different "companies," with the agreement that she should receive half of the oil obtained. By this time the yield was prodigious. The ragged, ignorant country boy became at once a millionaire, with an additional income variously estimated to be from *three to six thousand dollars a day!*

Those who remember Malvolio cross-gartered cannot wonder that the widow McGannon's heir should feel inclined to make, in Shoddy phrase, somewhat of a "splurge" on the occasion of his sudden good fortune. Why not? Young men do not fall every day into fields yellow with real golden buttercups. Besides, Tommy was good-hearted and generous; and, since the roots were sure to bloom again, he scattered the buttercups in every direction.

As may be supposed, Thomas lost no time in "seeing the world;" wherever he went, tales of his queer ways and startling expenditure split the ears of the groundlings. To hire the grandest suite of apartments of the leading hotels as he passed along, to entertain his acquaintances, intimate and casual, with princely munificence while he stayed, and when he left for an absence of a month or two, retain the rooms, with directions that any of his "friends" who might arrive in the meantime should be "made comfortable" at his expense—was said to be but a small item in his "sensation" movements. There were rumours that when he patronized the theatres (eschewing private boxes as "too confin'") he secured a dozen seats, in order to have room to "spread himself," as he said; but I record this eccentricity with mental reservations.

Certain it is, however, that on one occasion, while visiting one of the large Western cities (Chicago, I believe), he directed his friends to obtain for him "a prime bang turn-out," which means a carriage and two or more steeds to draw it. Soon he became sole proprietor of a "five-thousand-dollar team," with equipage to correspond. Now Tommy was glorious! Never a young man rode more incessantly before now since. His "team" seemed destined to solve the problem of perpetual motion. Half the time the gaping bystanders could not decide whether they witnessed a pleasure-ride or a "runaway."

But what youth of spirit could be expected to derive satisfaction for ever from any one mundane thing—even a “turn-out?” At the expiration of a fortnight, Tommy’s coachman, after vainly waiting two days for orders from “the boss,” presented himself before his employer in person.

Our Aladdin was lounging in an elegant apartment, moodily nibbling a cigar. Perhaps he had grown tired of “fun;” or it may be, he was thinking of a kind voice that the flame-demons had stilled. At all events, he was meditative.

The man coughed and said “Yer honer” twice, before Tommy looked up, with a gruff—“Hey? what do you want *now*? Who are you?”

“John, sir—the coachman, sir. Did you want the carriage brought round to-day, sir?”

“No. I’m going off in half-an-hour—going east.”

“Goin’, sir! An’ will I be stoppin’ wid you any longer, sir?”

“No. I s’pose not. Here, take this. That’ll square us.”

“Thank’ee, sir. Sure that’s good pay, sir. But, if I may make so bold, what’s to be done wid the horses, sir? Is it kept at Williams’s they’ll be, yer honer?”

“The hosses! Oh, I don’t want ’em no longer. I’m going off for good in a few minnits.” And Tommy, quietly puffing his cigar, consulted an enormous gold watch.

“But, yer honer——”

“Oh! go ’long with you. I don’t *want* the team, I tell you. Take ’em and keep ’em—kill ’em or do what you please with ’em—only clear out.”

“Be the Lord, sir! and is it *kape* the craytures *meself* you’re sayin’?”

Tommy nodded, gave another puff, and pointed to the door. “Yes, take ’em, carriage and all, and go about your business.”

One day, when Tommy was “doing” New York, he strode into Tiffany’s magnificent jewellery establishment on Broadway, and startled the assembled salesmen with a loud—“Show us a dimond!”

“Here is one, sir,” responded an elegantly modulated voice from the “diamond department.” “Eighty dollars, sir.”

“Pooh! not such a speck as that! Something bigger!”

“Allow me to show you this; very pure stone, sir, one hundred and sixty dollars.”

“Nonsense—bigger!”

Herewith the gentlemanly salesman (whom I have always suspected to be a noble lord in difficulties) produced a brilliant of about the size of a small pea. “Exquisite stone, sir—first water—eight hundred.”

“Look here!” cried Tommy, becoming exasperated. “If you’ve got a reg’lar dimond, fetch it out; if you haven’t, just say so.”

My lord, half amused, half vexed, here, by way of totally annihilating his rough customer, brought out the Koh-i-noor of the place. “Will *this* suit you, sir?—moderately fine stone; price, fifteen thousand dollars!”

“*Now* you’re comin’ to it!” cried Tommy, decidedly mollified. “Is this the tip-top biggest?”

"It is, sir," replied his lordship coolly (stroking his beard at the same time as if to say, "Now, my rustic friend, I have wasted quite enough time upon you—you may go.")

"You ain't got nothin' bigger now?"

"Nothing, I assure you."

"Then I'll take it!"

My lord, I grieve to say, lost his presence of mind, and stared; but Thomas at once produced a huge roll of "green-backs"—counted out the money, and the sale was concluded.

This, as I have been told, occurred more than a year ago. Now, my lord, having become somewhat familiar with the ways and means of Shoddy, would scarcely lift his eyelids were his coal-heaver to propose to buy out the entire concern.

Not all the newly rich, however, allow their money to be seen among men. There are instances in the oil country, as it is called, of men who, a few months ago, were at least tranquil in their poverty, and are now suffering all the tortures of the miser. I know of one whose wealth has come upon him so fast as to literally overwhelm him. He is wretched with the mere weight of possession. The flowing wells upon his single acre are yielding him four thousand dollars, in currency, *daily*, as his share of the profits. He is afraid to trust to the banks; and Government bonds do not look enough like money to satisfy him. He must have gold. Consequently, as fast as his money pours in, he converts it into specie, and packs it in boxes and butter-firkins. These he buries in his cellar, each one, as he hides it away, leaving a corresponding weight of care in his weary heart. Nothing is added to his personal comforts, and matters of luxury are unthought of. His sole extra outlay is to hire a guard of twenty men, to watch his house night and day. A less number might suffice, but perhaps half of them are required to act as a check upon the others! Poor rich man! who would dream his dreams, or share his waking cares to be worth a million?

On the other hand, I can point out a lately hard-working rustic whom riches has truly blest. What a grand, startled, honest look beams from the man's face! A millionaire, he can hardly write his own name; but something tells one that when the first great wave of 'riches' surged through his heart, some noble thoughts, long buried under the sands of want and toil, were laid bare, thoughts that he will cherish reverently. They will tell him new things of humanity, of his own undeveloped powers. They will guide him with an unerring wisdom in training his sons and daughters. The satirists of Shoddy must bow to that man, and let him pass.

As a foil to the bright, contented spirits bubbling up on the surface of Oil-Creek prosperity, we have circulating thunder-gusts in the form of men who have invested largely in untried lands, and failed to realize their expectations. Forlorn walls are to be seen in every direction, with their derrick-monuments marking the spot where hope and cash lie buried.

without a chance of resurrection. Not more black are the smoke-stacks, everywhere dotting the scene, than the looks of these men; and their talk is a mixture of gall and oil marvellous to hear. Sometimes a weary, patient gentleman is to be met, anxiously scanning the "operations," and asking questions of every clown and labourer he meets. He is an investigator, and he lacks what the Americans call "grit." You can see it in his eye. If he have not already lost his money "in oil," he will lose it very soon.

One of these heavy-hearted men was lately hastening along the plank sidewalk of Oil City, when he accidentally knocked over a half-starved-looking little girl whose tattered garments seemed to have long ago passed beyond the reach of soap.

"Oh, I beg your pardon! Are you hurt, my poor child?" he exclaimed, stooping to lift her.

"Go'long!" cried the girl, springing to her feet, and shaking down her rags with immense *hauteur*—"I ain't poor! Dad struck ile yesterday!"

We can imagine the wistful gaze that followed the child on her onward way.

It is instructive to watch the developments of would-be Shoddy. In the conflict of pride and cupidity the best part of the man is taken captive, literally falling into the hands of the enemy. Instructive, too, and sad, to note the trials and mortifications befalling the elect of Shoddy. Think of the chagrin of the new millionaire (or billionaire?) at Washington, when he read in the morning papers comments like this on his first grand ball:—"A truly magnificent affair; cost, it is estimated, \$100,000, which represents the exact profit on one hundred cannon, large numbers of which have been furnished the Government by this contractor."

Think of the weariness of the Shoddy lady who, ennuied with the superb house and uncongenial surroundings, said to a friend of mine—"Ah, it's all very fine, but my old friends kind o' stay 'way from me, and my new ones make fun of me, I know they do. Everything that money can buy I've got by the bushel, but I ain't happy, Miss Mary, I really ain't happy."

Study Shoddy while you may. It is a transient "aristocracy" at best. Soon its strong characteristics will be lost, its peculiarities worn away. Its like has never been on earth before. Remembering those ten remarkable years when speculation ran mad over Europe, when the South Sea bubble encompassed all England, and John Law ruled France with his Midas-promise and "dissolving views," it is safe to assert that the Shoddy of to-day stands without a parallel in human history. It is the one "new thing under the sun" not dreamt of by Solomon. America, in common with all Christendom, regards it with mingled feelings of disgust, amusement, and concern. "Where will it end?" is the question on every lip.

Veddy it will end just where it began—in human nature itself. It is not more American, after all, than it is Adamite. That it has, for

the present, found "a local habitation and a name" in America is because nowhere else has nature so lavishly and unexpectedly poured forth her treasures among the people, or a national emergency arisen offering such unparalleled temptations both to individual enterprise and cupidity. And Shoddy has its mission. It will enable mankind to see more plainly than ever before the absurdity of pretence, the vulgarity of display, and the folly of imagining that money alone can ever make a gentleman. It will point a brazen finger, for all time, at imposture and treason, and the rottenness of the virtue that presents its fair side to individual men, but yields to temptation in dealing with governments and corporations. It will develop new necessities and new industries—bring a fresh, hardy element to society by educating new classes—open a channel through which the poor may receive a share of the refining influences which surround the rich—and, what is very important to America just now, it will put money in the national purse.

Large capitalists are needed in these days for vast enterprises, and Shoddy, with its bursting coffers, can furnish its quota of these. The Americo-Russian telegraph has its prospective message to Shoddy. The Pacific railroad is its humble servant. Other proposed public improvements beckon to it invitingly. Science, even, is pointing the way that Shoddy must go. From the north, south, east, west—wherever gold, oil, quicksilver, and coal lie buried—there is a call for Shoddy to come and grow richer still; and Shoddy will eagerly answer the summons. Just now when the nation is coming out of its struggle for life or death, when it requires fresh explorers and new resources to enable it to meet the tremendous demands that have been made upon it, Providence reveals these long-kept secrets, discloses these hidden stores, these limitless reservoirs of wealth and—let us believe it—gives us Shoddy.

It may seem a strange whim to begin my argument with fairy-land and end it with Providence; but does not life itself so open and close? The magic delights of our childhood become recognized as God-given in our age. Our early wishes are for fairy-benefits; our later prayers are for Divine blessings.



Amadis.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER X

THE HOUSEMAID'S FACE.



LL was quiet at Thorpe-Am-brose. The hall was solitary, the rooms were dark. The servants, waiting for the supper hour in the garden at the back of the house, looked up at the clear heaven and the rising moon, and agreed that there was little prospect of the return of the picnic party until later in the night. The general opinion, led by the high authority of the cook, predicted that they might all sit down to supper without the least fear of being disturbed by the bell. Having arrived at this conclusion, the servants assembled round the tables, and exactly at the moment when they sat down, the bell rang.

The footman, wondering, went upstairs to open the door, and found to his astonishment Midwinter waiting alone on the threshold, and looking (in the servant's opinion) miserably ill. He asked for a light, and, saying he wanted nothing else, withdrew at once to his room. The footman went back to his fellow-servants, and reported that something had certainly happened to his master's friend.

On entering his room, Midwinter closed the door, and hurriedly filled a bag with the necessaries for travelling. This done, he took from a locked drawer, and placed in the breast-pocket of his coat, some little presents which Allan had given to him—a cigar-case, a purse, and a set of studs in plain gold. Having possessed himself of these memorials, he



Miss Gwilt

snatched up the bag, and laid his hand on the door. Then, for a moment, he paused. There, the headlong haste of all his actions thus far suddenly ceased, and the hard despair in his face began to soften: he waited, with the door in his hand.

Up to that moment he had been conscious of but one motive that animated him, but one purpose that he was resolute to achieve. "For Allan's sake!" he had said to himself, when he looked back towards the fatal landscape and saw his friend leaving him to meet the woman at the pool. "For Allan's sake!" he had said again, when he crossed the open country beyond the wood, and saw afar, in the grey twilight, the long line of embankment and the distant glimmer of the railway lamps beckoning him away already to the iron road.

It was only when he now paused before he closed the door behind him—it was only when his own impetuous rapidity of action came for the first time to a check—that the nobler nature of the man rose in protest against the superstitious despair which was hurrying him from all that he held dear. His conviction of the terrible necessity of leaving Allan for Allan's good, had not been shaken for an instant since he had seen the first vision of the Dream realized on the shores of the Mere. But now, for the first time, his own heart rose against him in unanswerable rebuke. "Go, if you must and will! but remember the time when you were ill, and he sat by your bedside; friendless, and he opened his heart to you—and write, if you fear to speak; write and ask him to forgive you, before you leave him for ever!"

The half-opened door closed again softly. Midwinter sat down at the writing-table and took up the pen. He tried again and again, and yet again, to write the farewell words; he tried, till the floor all round him was littered with torn sheets of paper. Turn from them which way he would, the old times still came back and faced him reproachfully. The spacious bedchamber in which he sat, narrowed, in spite of him, to the sick usher's garret at the West-country inn. The kind hand that had once patted him on the shoulder, touched him again; the kind voice that had cheered him, spoke unchangeably in the old friendly tones. He flung his arms on the table, and dropped his head on them in tearless despair. The parting words that his tongue was powerless to utter, his pen was powerless to write. Mercilessly in earnest, his superstition pointed to him to go while the time was his own; mercilessly in earnest, his love for Allan held him back till the farewell plea for Gordon and his wife was written.

He rose with a sudden resolution, and rang for the servant. "When Mr. Armstrong returns," he said, "ask him to excuse my coming downstairs, and say that I am trying to get to sleep." He locked the door and put out the light, and sat down alone in the darkness. "The night will keep us apart," he said, "and time may help me to write. I will go in the early morning; I may go while——" The thought died in him uncompleted; and the sharp agony of the struggle closed within him the first cry of suffering that had entered him yet.

He waited in the darkness. As the time stole on, his senses remained sensibly awake, but his mind began to sink slowly under the heavy strain that had now been laid on it for some hours past. A dull vacancy possessed him; he made no attempt to kindle the light and write once more. He never started; he never moved to the open window, when the first sound of approaching wheels broke in on the silence of the night. He heard the carriages draw up at the door; he heard the horses champing their bits; he heard the voices of Allan and young Pedgitt on the steps—and still he sat quiet in the darkness, and still no interest was roused in him by the sounds that reached his ear from outside.

The voices remained audible after the carriages had been driven away; the two young men were evidently lingering on the steps before they took leave of each other. Every word they said reached Midwinter through the open window. Their one subject of conversation was the new governess. Allan's voice was loud in her praise. He had never passed such an hour of delight in his life as the hour he had spent with Miss Gwilt in the boat, on the way from Hurle Mere to the picnic party waiting at the other Broad. Agreeing, on his side, with all that his client said in praise of the charming stranger, young Pedgitt appeared to treat the subject, when it fell into his hands, from a different point of view. Miss Gwilt's attractions had not so entirely absorbed his attention as to prevent him from noticing the impression which the new governess had produced on her employer and her pupil.

"There's a screw loose somewhere, sir, in Major Milroy's family," said the voice of young Pedgitt. "Did you notice how the major and his daughter looked when Miss Gwilt made her excuses for being late at the Mere? You don't remember? Do you remember what Miss Gwilt said?"

"Something about Mrs. Milroy, wasn't it?" Allan rejoined.

Young Pedgitt's voice dropped mysteriously a note lower.

"Miss Gwilt reached the cottage this afternoon, sir, at the time when I told you she would reach it, and she would have joined us at the time I told you she would come, but for Mrs. Milroy. Mrs. Milroy went for her upstairs as soon as she entered the house, and kept her upstairs a good half hour and more. That was Miss Gwilt's excuse, Mr. Armadale, for being late at the Mere."

"Well, and what then?"

"You seem to forget, sir, what the whole neighbourhood has heard about Mrs. Milroy ever since the major first settled among us. We have all been told, on the doctor's own authority, that she is too great a sufferer to see strangers. Isn't it a little odd that she should have suddenly turned out well enough to see Miss Gwilt (on her husband's account) the moment Miss Gwilt entered the house?"

"Not a bit of it! Of course she was anxious to make acquaintance with her daughter's governess."

"Likely enough, Mr. Armadale, but the major and Miss Milroy don't

see it in that light, at any rate. I had my eye on them both when the governess told them that Mrs. Milroy had sent for her. If ever I saw a girl look thoroughly frightened, Miss Milroy was that girl; and (if I may be allowed, in the strictest confidence, to libel a gallant soldier) I should say that the major himself was much in the same condition. Take my word for it, sir, there's something wrong upstairs in that pretty cottage of yours; and Miss Gwilt is mixed up in it already."

There was a minute of silence. When the voices were next heard by Midwinter, they were farther away from the house—Allan was probably accompanying young Pedgitt a few steps on his way back.

After a while, Allan's voice was audible once more under the portico, making inquiries after his friend; answered by the servant's voice giving Midwinter's message. This brief interruption over, the silence was not broken again till the time came for shutting up the house. The servants' footsteps passing to and fro, the clang of closing doors, the barking of a disturbed dog in the stable-yard—these sounds warned Midwinter that it was getting late. He rose mechanically to kindle a light. But his head was giddy, his hand trembled—he laid aside the match-box, and returned to his chair. The conversation between Allan and young Pedgitt had ceased to occupy his attention the instant he ceased to hear it; and now again, the sense that the precious time was slipping him became a lost sense, as soon as the house noises which had awakened it had passed away. His energies of body and mind were both alike worn out; he waited with a stolid resignation for the trouble that was to come to him with the coming day.

An interval passed, and the silence was once more disturbed by voices outside; the voices of a man and a woman this time. The first few words exchanged between them indicated plainly enough a meeting of the clandestine kind; and revealed the man as one of the servants at Thorpe-Ambrose, and the woman as one of the servants at the cottage.

Here again, after the first greetings were over, the subject of the new governess became the all-absorbing subject of conversation. The woman was brimful of forebodings (inspired solely by Miss Gwilt's good looks), which she poured out irrepressibly on the man, try as he might to divert her to other topics. Sooner or later, let him match her words, there would be an awful "upset" at the cottage. Her master, it might be mentioned in confidence, led a dreadful life with her mistress. The major was the best of men; he hadn't a thought in his heart beyond his daughter and his ever-lasting clock. But only let a nice-looking woman come near the place, and Mrs. Milroy was jealous of her—raging jealous, like a woman possessed, on that miserable sick-bed of hers. If Miss Gwilt (who was certainly good-looking, in spite of her hideous hair) didn't blow the fire into a flame before many days were over their heads, the mistress was the mistress no longer, but somebody else. Whatever happened, the fact, this time, would lie at the door of the major's mother. The old lady and the mistress had had a dreadful quarrel two years

ance; and the old lady had gone away in a fury, telling her son, before all the servants, that if he had a spark of spirit in him, he would never submit to his wife's temper as he did. It would be too much perhaps to accuse the major's mother of purposely picking out a handsome governess to spite the major's wife. But it might be safely said that the old lady was the last person in the world to humour the mistress's jealousy, by declining to engage a capable and respectable governess for her granddaughter, because that governess happened to be blessed with good looks. How it was all to end (except that it was certain to end badly) no human creature could say. Things were looking as black already as things well could. Miss Neelie was crying, after the day's pleasure (which was one bad sign); the mistress had found fault with nobody (which was another); the master had wished her good-night through the door (which was a third); and the governess had locked herself up in her room (which was the worst sign of all, for it looked as if she distrusted the servants). Thus the stream of the woman's gossip ran on, and thus it reached Midwinter's ears through the window, till the clock in the stable-yard struck, and stopped the talking. When the last vibrations of the ball had died away, the voices were not audible again, and the silence was broken no more.

Another interval passed, and Midwinter made a new effort to rouse himself. This time he kindled the light without hesitation, and took the pen in hand.

He wrote at the first trial with a sudden facility of expression, which, surprising him as he went on, ended in rousing in him some vague suspicion of himself. He left the table, and bathed his head and face in water, and came back to read what he had written. The language was barely intelligible—sentences were left unfinished; words were misplaced one for the other—every line recorded the protest of the weary brain against the merciless will that had forced it into action. Midwinter tore up the sheet of paper as he had torn up the other sheets before it—and sinking under the struggle at last, laid his weary head on the pillow. Almost on the instant, exhaustion overcame him; and before he could put the light out he fell asleep.

He was roused by a noise at the door. The sunlight was peering into the room; the candle had burnt down into the socket; and the servant was waiting outside with a letter which had come for him by the morning's post.

"I ventured to disturb you, sir," said the man, when Midwinter opened the door, "because the letter is marked 'immediate,' and I didn't know but it might be of some consequence."

Midwinter thanked him, and looked at the letter. It was of some consequence—the handwriting was Mr. Brock's:

'He paused to collect his faculties. The torn sheets of paper on the floor recalled to him in a moment the position in which he stood. He locked the door again, in the fear that Allan might rise earlier than usual, and come in to make inquiries. Then—feeling strangely little interest in

anything that the rector could write to him now—he opened Mr. Brook's letter, and read these lines :—

“ Tuesday.

“ MY DEAR MIDWINTER,—It is sometimes best to tell bad news plainly, in few words. Let me tell mine at once, in one sentence. My precautions have all been defeated : the woman has escaped me.

“ This misfortune—for it is nothing less—happened yesterday (Monday). Between eleven and twelve in the forenoon of that day, the business which originally brought me to London obliged me to go to Doctors' Commons, and to leave my servant Robert to watch the house opposite our lodging until my return. About an hour and a half after my departure he observed an empty cab drawn up at the door of the house. Boxes and bags made their appearance first ; they were followed by the woman herself, in the dress I had first seen her in. Having previously secured a cab, Robert traced her to the terminus of the North-Western Railway—saw her pass through the ticket-office—kept her in view till she reached the platform—and there, in the crowd and confusion caused by the starting of a large mixed train, lost her. I must do him the justice to say that he at once took the right course in this emergency. Instead of wasting time in searching for her on the platform, he looked along the line of carriages ; and he positively declares that he failed to see her in any one of them. He admits, at the same time, that his search (conducted between two o'clock, when he lost sight of her, and ten minutes past, when the train started) was, in the confusion of the moment, necessarily an imperfect one. But this latter circumstance, in my opinion, matters little. I as firmly disbelieve in the woman's actual departure by that train as if I had searched every one of the carriages myself ; and you, I have no doubt, will entirely agree with me.

“ You now know how the disaster happened. Let us not waste time and words in lamenting it. The evil is done—and you and I together must find the way to remedy it.

“ What I have accomplished already, on my side, may be told in two words. Any hesitation I might have previously felt at trusting this delicate business in strangers' hands, was at an end the moment I heard Robert's news. I went back at once to the city, and placed the whole matter confidentially before my lawyers. The conference was a long one ; and when I left the office it was past the post-hour, or I should have written to you on Monday instead of writing to-day. My interview with the lawyers was not very encouraging. They warn me plainly that serious difficulties stand in the way of our recovering the lost trace. But they have promised to do their best ; and we have decided on the course to be taken—excepting one point on which we totally differ. I must tell you what this difference is ; for while business keeps me away from Thorpe-Ambrose, you are the only person whom I can trust to put my convictions to the test.

“ The lawyers were of opinion, then, that the woman has been aware

from the first that I was watching her; that there is, consequently, no present hope of her being rash enough to appear personally at Thorpe-Ambrose; that any mischief she may have it in contemplation to do, will be done in the first instance by deputy; and that the only wise course for Allan's friends and guardians to take, is to wait passively till events enlighten them. My own idea is diametrically opposed to this. After what has happened at the railway, I cannot deny that the woman must have discovered that I was watching her. But she has no reason to suppose that she has not succeeded in deceiving me; and I firmly believe she is bold enough to take us by surprise, and to win, or force her way into Allan's confidence before we are prepared to prevent her. You and you only (while I am detained in London) can decide whether I am right or wrong—and you can do it in this way. Ascertain at once whether any woman who is a stranger in the neighbourhood has appeared since Monday last, at, or near, Thorpe-Ambrose. If any such person has been observed (and nobody escapes observation in the country), take the first opportunity you can get of seeing her, and ask yourself if her face does, or does not, answer certain plain questions which I am now about to write down for you. You may depend on my accuracy. I saw the woman unveiled on more than one occasion—and the last time through an excellent glass.

"1. Is her hair light brown, and (apparently) not very plentiful?
2. Is her forehead high, narrow, and sloping backward from the brow?
3. Are her eyebrows very faintly marked, and are her eyes small, and nearer dark than light—either grey or hazel (I have not seen her close enough to be certain which)? 4. Is her nose aquiline? 5. Are her lips thin, and is the upper lip long? 6. Does her complexion look, like an originally fair complexion, which has deteriorated into a dull, sickly paleness? 7 (and lastly). Has she a retreating chin, and is there, on the left side of it, a mark of some kind—a mole or a scar, I can't say which?

"I add nothing about her expression, for you may see her under circumstances which may partially alter it as seen by me. Test her by her features, which no circumstances can change. If there is a stranger in the neighbourhood, and if her face answers my seven questions—you have found the woman! Go instantly, in that case, to the nearest lawyer, and pledge my name and credit for whatever expenses may be incurred in keeping her under inspection night and day. Having done this, take the speediest means of communicating with me; and whether my business is finished or not, I will start for Norfolk by the first train.

"In any event—whether you succeed or whether you fail in confirming my suspicions—write to me by return of post. If it is only to tell me that you have received my letter, write! I am suffering under anxiety and suspense, separated as I am from Allan, which you alone can relieve. Having said this, I know you well enough to feel sure that I need say no more.

Always your friend,

"DUNCAN BATHURST."

Hardened by the fatalist conviction that now possessed him, Midwinter read the rector's confession of defeat from the first line to the last, without the slightest betrayal either of interest or surprise. The one part of the letter at which he looked back was the closing part of it. He read the last paragraph for the second time; and then waited for a moment, reflecting on it. "I owe much to Mr. Brock's kindness," he thought; "and I shall never see Mr. Brock again. It is useless and hopeless—but he asks me to do it, and it shall be done. A moment's look at her will be enough—a moment's look at her with his letter in my hand—and a line to tell him that the woman is here!"

Again he stood hesitating at the half-opened door; again, the cruel necessity of writing his farewell to Allan stopped him, and stared him in the face.

He looked aside doubtfully at the rector's letter. "I will write the two together," he said. "One may help the other." His face flushed deep as the words escaped him. He was conscious of doing, what he had not done yet—of voluntarily putting off the evil hour; of making Mr. Brock the pretext for gaining the last respite left, the respite of time.

The only sound that reached him through the open door was the sound of Allan stirring noisily in the next room. He stepped at once into the empty corridor; and, meeting no one on the stairs, made his way out of the house. The dread that his resolution to leave Allan might fail him, if he saw Allan again, was as vividly present to his mind in the morning as it had been all through the night. He drew a deep breath of relief as he descended the house steps—relief at having escaped the friendly greeting of the morning from the one human creature whom he loved!

He entered the shrubbery with Mr. Brock's letter in his hand, and took the nearest way that led to the major's cottage. Not the slightest recollection was in his mind of the talk which had found its way to his ears during the night. His one reason for determining to see the woman, was the reason which the rector had put in his mind. The one remembrance that now guided him to the place in which she lived, was the remembrance of Allan's exclamation when he first identified the governess with the figure at the pool.

Arrived at the gate of the cottage, he stopped. The thought struck him that he might defeat his own object if he looked at the rector's questions in the woman's presence. Her suspicions would be probably roused, in the first instance, by his asking to see her (as he had determined to ask, with or without an excuse); and the appearance of the letter in his hand might confirm them. She might defeat him by instantly leaving the room. Determined to fix the description in his mind first, and then to confront her, he opened the letter; and, turning away slowly by the side of the house, read the seven questions which he felt absolutely assured beforehand the woman's lips would answer.

In the morning quiet of the park, slight noises travelled far. A slight noise disturbed Midwinter over the letter.

He looked up and found himself on the brink of a broad grassy trench, having the park on one side and the high laurel hedge of an enclosure on the other. The enclosure evidently surrounded the back garden of the cottage; and the trench was intended to protect it from being damaged by the cattle grazing in the park. Listening carefully as the slight sound which had disturbed him grew fainter, he recognized in it the rustling of women's dresses. A few paces ahead, the trench was crossed by a bridge (closed by a wicket-gate) which connected the garden with the park. He passed through the gate, crossed the bridge, and, opening a door at the other end, found himself in a summer-house, thickly covered with creepers, and commanding a full view of the garden from end to end.

He looked, and saw the figures of two ladies walking slowly away from him towards the cottage. The shorter of the two failed to occupy his attention for an instant—he never stopped to think whether she was, or was not, the major's daughter. His eyes were riveted on the other figure; the figure that moved over the garden walk with the long lightly-falling dress, and the easy seductive grace. There, presented exactly as he had seen her once already—there, with her back again turned on him, was the Woman at the pool!

There was a chance that they might take another turn in the garden—a turn back towards the summer-house. On that chance Midwinter waited. No consciousness of the intrusion that he was committing had stopped him at the door of the summer-house; and no consciousness of it troubled him even now. Every finer sensibility in his nature, sinking under the cruel laceration of the past night, had ceased to feel. The dogged resolution to do what he had come to do, was the one animating influence left alive in him. He acted, he even looked, as the most stolid man living might have acted and looked in his place. He was self-possessed enough, in the interval of expectation, before governess and pupil reached the end of the walk, to open Mr. Brock's letter, and to fortify his memory by a last look at the paragraph which described her face.

He was still absorbed over the description, when he heard the smooth rustle of the dresses travelling towards him again. Standing in the shadow of the summer-house, he waited while she lessened the distance between them. With her written portrait vividly impressed on his mind, and with the clear light of the morning to help him, his eyes questioned her as she came on; and these were the answers that her face gave him back.

The hair in the rector's description was light brown and not plentiful. This woman's hair, superbly luxuriant in its growth, was of the one unpardonably remarkable shade of colour which the prejudice of the Northern nations never entirely forgives—it was red! The forehead in the rector's description was high, narrow, and sloping backward from the brow; the eyebrows were faintly marked, and the eyes small, and in colour either grey or hazel. This woman's forehead was low, upright, and broad towards

the temples; her eyebrows, at once strongly and delicately marked, were a shade darker than her hair; her eyes, large, bright, and well-opened, were of that purely blue colour, without a tinge in it of grey or green, so often presented to our admiration in pictures and books, so rarely met with in the living face. The nose in the rector's description was aquiline. The line of this woman's nose bent neither outward nor inward: it was the straight delicately-moulded nose (with the short upper lip beneath) of the ancient statues and busts. The lips in the rector's description were thin, and the upper lip long; the complexion was of a dull sickly paleness; the chin retreating, and the mark of a mole or a scar on the left side of it. This woman's lips were full, rich, and sensual. Her complexion was the lovely complexion which accompanies such hair as hers—so delicately bright in its rosier tints, so warmly and softly white in its gentler gradations of colour on the forehead and the neck. Her chin, round and dimpled, was pure of the slightest blemish in every part of it, and perfectly in line with her forehead to the end. Nearer and nearer, and fairer and fairer she came, in the glow of the morning light—the most startling, the most unanswerable contradiction that eye could see, or mind conceive, to the description in the rector's letter.

Both governess and pupil were close to the summer-house before they looked that way, and noticed Midwinter standing inside. The governess saw him first.

"A friend of yours, Miss Milroy?" she asked quietly, without starting, or betraying any sign of surprise.

Neelie recognized him instantly. Prejudiced against Midwinter by his conduct when his friend had introduced him at the cottage, she now fairly detested him as the unlucky first cause of her misunderstanding with Allan at the picnic. Her face flushed, and she drew back from the summer-house with an expression of merciless surprise.

"He is a friend of Mr. Armadale's," she replied sharply. "I don't know what he wants, or why he is here."

"A friend of Mr. Armadale's!" The governess's face lit up with a suddenly-roused interest as she repeated the words. She returned Midwinter's look, still steadily fixed on her, with equal steadiness on her side.

"For my part," pursued Neelie, resenting Midwinter's insensibility to her presence on the scene, "I think it a great liberty to treat papa's garden as if it was the open park!"

The governess turned round, and gently interposed.

"My dear Miss Milroy," she remonstrated, "there are certain distinctions to be observed. This gentleman is a friend of Mr. Armadale's. You could hardly express yourself more strongly, if he was a perfect stranger."

"I express my opinion," retorted Neelie, chafing under the artificially indulgent tone in which the governess addressed her. "It's a matter of taste, Miss Gwilt; and tastes differ." She turned away petulantly, and walked back by herself to the cottage.

"She is very young," said Miss Gwilt, appealing with a smile to Midwinter's forbearance; "and, as you must see for yourself, sir, she is a spoilt child." She paused—showed, for an instant only, her surprise at Midwinter's strange silence and strange persistency in keeping his eyes still fixed on her—then set herself, with a charming grace and readiness, to help him out of the false position in which he stood. "As you have extended your walk thus far," she resumed, "perhaps you will kindly favour me, on your return, by taking a message to your friend? Mr. Armadale has been so good as to invite me to see the Thorpe-Ambrose gardens this morning. Will you say that Major Milroy permits me to accept the invitation (in company with Miss Milroy) between ten and eleven o'clock?" For a moment her eyes rested, with a renewed look of interest, on Midwinter's face. She waited, still in vain, for an answering word from him—smiled, as if his extraordinary silence amused rather than angered her—and followed her pupil back to the cottage.

It was only when the last trace of her had disappeared that Midwinter roused himself, and attempted to realize the position in which he stood. The revelation of her beauty was in no respect answerable for the breathless astonishment which had held him spell-bound up to this moment. The one clear impression she had produced on him thus far, began and ended with his discovery of the astounding contradiction that her face offered, in one feature after another, to the description in Mr. Brook's letter. All beyond this was vague and misty—a dim consciousness of a tall, elegant woman, and of kind words, modestly and gracefully spoken to him, and nothing more.

He advanced a few steps into the garden, without knowing why—stopped, glancing hither and thither like a man lost—recognized the summer-house by an effort, as if years had elapsed since he had seen it—and made his way out again, at last, into the park. Even here, he wandered first in one direction, then in another. His mind was still reeling under the shock that had fallen on it; his perceptions were all confused. Something kept him mechanically in action, walking eagerly without a motive, walking he knew not where.

A far less sensitively-organized man might have been overwhelmed, as he was overwhelmed now, by the immense, the instantaneous revulsion of feeling which the event of the last few minutes had wrought in his mind.

At the memorable instant when he had opened the door of the summer-house, no confusing influence troubled his faculties. Right or wrong, in all that related to his position towards his friend, he had reached an absolutely definite conclusion, by an absolutely definite process of thought. The whole strength of the motive which had driven him into the resolution to part from Allan, rooted itself in the belief that he had seen at Harle House the fatal fulfilment of the first Vision of the Dream. And this belief, in its turn, rested, necessarily, on the conviction that the woman who was the one survivor of the tragedy in Madeira, must be also inevi-

tably the woman whom he had seen standing in the Shadow's place at the pool. Firm in that persuasion, he had himself compared the object of his distrust and of the rector's distrust with the description written by the rector himself—a description, carefully minute, by a man entirely trustworthy—and his own eyes had informed him that the woman whom he had seen at the Mere, and the woman whom Mr. Brook had identified in London, were not one, but Two. In the place of the Dream-Shadow, there had stood, on the evidence of the rector's letter, not the instrument of the Fatality—but a stranger!

No such doubts as might have troubled a less superstitious man, were started in *his* mind by the discovery that had now opened on him.

It never occurred to him to ask himself, whether a stranger might not be the appointed instrument of the Fatality, now when the letter had persuaded him that a stranger had been revealed as the figure in the dream-landscape. No such idea entered, or could enter, his mind. The one woman, whom *his* superstition dreaded, was the woman who had entwined herself with the lives of the two Armadales in the first generation, and with the fortunes of the two Armadales in the second—who was at once the marked object of his father's death-bed warning, and the first cause of the family calamities which had opened Allan's way to the Thorpe-Ambrose estate—the woman, in a word, whom he would have known instinctively, but for Mr. Brook's letter, to be the woman whom he had now actually seen.

Looking at events as they had just happened, under the influence of the misapprehension into which the rector had innocently misled him, his mind saw and seized its new conclusion instantaneously; acting precisely as it had acted in the past time of his interview with Mr. Brook at the Isle of Man.

Exactly as he had once declared it to be an all-sufficient refutation of the idea of the Fatality; that he had never met with the timber-ship in any of his voyages at sea—so he now seized on the similarly-derived conclusion, that the whole claim of the Dream to a supernatural origin stood self-refuted by the disclosure of a stranger in the Shadow's place. Once started from this point—once encouraged to let his love for Allan influence him undividedly again—his mind hurried along the whole resulting chain of thought at lightning speed. If the Dream was proved to be no longer a warning from the other world, it followed, inevitably, that accident and not fate had led the way to the night on the Wreck, and that all the events which had happened since Allan and he had parted from Mr. Brook, were events in themselves harmless, which his superstition had distorted from their proper shape. In less than a moment, his mobile imagination had taken him back to the morning at Gainsborough when he had revealed to the rector the secret of his name; when he had declared to the rector, with his father's letter before his eyes, the better truth that was in him. Now once more, he felt his heart holding firmly by the bond of brotherhood between Allan and

himself; now once more he could say with the eager sincerity of the old time, "If the thought of leaving him breaks my heart, the thought of leaving him is wrong!" As that nobler conviction possessed itself again of his mind—quieting the tumult, clearing the confusion within him—the house at Thorpe-Ambrose, with Allan on the steps, waiting and looking for him, opened on his eyes through the trees. A sense of illimitable relief lifted his eager spirit high above the cares, and doubts, and fears that had oppressed it so long; and showed him once more the better and brighter future of his early dreams. His eyes filled with tears, and he pressed the rector's letter, in his wild passionate way to his lips, as he looked at Allan through the vista of the trees. "But for this morsel of paper," he thought, "my life might have been one long sorrow to me, and my father's crime might have parted us for ever!"

Such was the result of the stratagem which had shown the housemaid's face to Mr. Brock as the face of Miss Gwilt. And so—by shaking Midwinter's trust in his own superstition, in the one case in which that superstition pointed to the truth—did Mother Oldershaw's cunning triumph over difficulties and dangers, which had never been contemplated by Mother Oldershaw herself.

CHAPTER XI.

MISS GWILT AMONG THE QUICKSANDS.

1.—*From the Reverend Decimus Brock to Osias Midwinter.*

"Thursday.

"MY DEAR MIDWINTER,—No words can tell what a relief it was to me to get your letter this morning, and what a happiness I honestly feel in having been, thus far, proved to be in the wrong. The precautions you have taken in case the woman should still confirm my apprehensions by venturing herself at Thorpe-Ambrose, seem to me to be all that can be desired. You are no doubt sure to hear of her from one or other of the people in the lawyer's office, whom you have asked to inform you of the appearance of a stranger in the town.

"I am the more pleased at finding how entirely I can trust you in this matter—for I am likely to be obliged to leave Allan's interests longer than I supposed solely in your hands. My visit to Thorpe-Ambrose must, I regret to say, be deferred for two months. The only one of my brother-clergymen in London, who is able to take my duty for me, cannot make it convenient to remove with his family to Somersetshire before that time. I have no alternative but to finish my business here, and be back at my rectory on Saturday next. If anything happens, you will of course instantly communicate with me—and, in that case, be the inconvenience what it may, I must leave home for Thorpe-Ambrose. If, on the other hand, all goes more smoothly than my own obstinate apprehensions will allow

me to suppose, then Allan (to whom I have written) must not expect to see me till this day two months.

"No result has, up to this time, rewarded our exertions to recover the trace lost at the railway. I will keep my letter open, however, until post-time, in case the next few hours bring any news.

"Always truly yours,

"DECIFFUS BROCK."

"P.S.—I have just heard from the lawyers'. They have found out the name the woman passed by in London. If this discovery (not a very important one, I am afraid,) suggests any new course of proceeding to you, pray act on it at once. The name is—Miss Gwilt."

2.—*From Miss Gwilt to Mrs. Oldershaw.*

"The Cottage, Thorpe-Ambrose,

"Saturday, June 28th.

"If you will promise not to be alarmed, Mamma Oldershaw, I will begin this letter in a very odd way, by copying a page of a letter written by somebody else. You have an excellent memory, and you may not have forgotten that I received a note from Major Milroy's mother (after she had engaged me as governess), on Monday last. It was dated and signed; and here it is, as far as the first page:—'June 23rd, 1851. Dear Madam,—Pray excuse my troubling you, before you go to Thorpe-Ambrose, with a word more about the habits observed in my son's household. When I had the pleasure of seeing you at two o'clock to-day, in Kingsdown Crescent, I had another appointment in a distant part of London at three; and, in the hurry of the moment, one or two little matters escaped me, which I think I ought to impress on your attention.' The rest of the letter is not of the slightest importance, but the lines that I have just copied, are well worthy of all the attention you can bestow on them. They have saved me from discovery, my dear, before I have been a week in Major Milroy's service!

"It happened no later than yesterday evening, and it began and ended in this manner,—

"There is a gentleman here (of whom I shall have more to say presently), who is an intimate friend of young Armadale's, and who bears the strange name of Midwinter. He contrived yesterday to speak to me alone in the park. Almost as soon as he opened his lips, I found that my name had been discovered in London (no doubt by the Somersetshire clergyman); and that Mr. Midwinter had been chosen (evidently by the same person) to identify the Miss Gwilt who had vanished from Brompton, with the Miss Gwilt who had appeared at Thorpe-Ambrose. You foresaw this danger, I remember; but you could scarcely have imagined that the exposure would threaten me so soon.

"I spare you the details of our conversation, to come to the end.

Mr. Midwinter put the matter very delicately, declaring, to my great surprise, that he felt quite certain himself, that I was not the Miss Gwilt of whom his friend was in search; and that he only acted as he did out of regard to the anxiety of a person whose wishes he was bound to respect. Would I assist him, in setting that anxiety completely at rest, so far as I was concerned, by kindly answering one plain question—which he had no other right to ask me than the right my indulgence might give him? The lost 'Miss Gwilt' had been missed on Monday last, at two o'clock, in the crowd on the platform of the North-Western Railway, in Euston Square. Would I authorise him to say, that on that day, and at that hour, the Miss Gwilt who was Major Milroy's governess, had never been near the place?

"I need hardly tell you that I seized the fine opportunity he had given me of disarming all future suspicion. I took a high tone on the spot, and met him with the old lady's letter. He politely refused to look at it. I insisted on his looking at it. 'I don't choose to be mistaken,' I said, 'for a woman who may be a bad character, because she happens to bear, or to have assumed, the same name as mine. I insist on your reading the first part of this letter for my satisfaction, if not for your own.' He was obliged to comply—and there was the proof, in the old lady's own handwriting, that at two o'clock on Monday last, she and I were together in Kingsdown Crescent, which any directory would tell him is a 'crescent' in Bayewater! I leave you to imagine his apologies, and the perfect sweetness with which I received them.

"I might, of course, if I had not preserved the letter, have referred him to you, or to the major's mother with similar results. As it is, the object has been gained without trouble or delay. *I have been proved not to be myself*; and one of the many dangers that threatened me at Thorpe-Ambrose, is a danger blown over from this moment. Your housemaid's face may not be a very handsome one; but there is no denying that it has done us excellent service.

"So much for the past; now for the future. You shall hear how I get on with the people about me; and you shall judge for yourself what the chances are, for and against my becoming mistress of Thorpe-Ambrose.

"Let me begin with young Armadale—because it is beginning with good news. I have produced the right impression on him already, and heaven knows that is nothing to boast of! Any moderately good-looking woman who chose to take the trouble, could make him fall in love with her. He is a rattle-pated young fool—one of those noisy, rosy, light-haired, good-tempered men, whom I particularly detest. I had a whole hour alone with him in a taxi, the first day I came here, and I have ~~made~~ ^{given} use of my time, I can tell you, from that day to this. The only difficulty with him is the difficulty of concealing my own feelings—especially when he turns my dislike of him into downright hatred, by ~~reminding~~ ^{reminding} me of his mother. I really never saw a man whom

I could use so ill, if I had the opportunity. He will give me the opportunity, I believe, if no accident happens, sooner than we calculated on. I have just returned from a party at the great house, in celebration of the rent-day dinner, and the squire's attentions to me, and my modest reluctance to receive them, have already excited general remark.

"My pupil, Miss Milroy, comes next. She too is rosy and foolish; and, what is more, awkward and squat and freckled and ill-tempered and ill-dressed. No fear of her, though she hates me like poison, which is a great comfort, for I get rid of her out of lesson-time and walking-time. It is perfectly easy to see that she has made the most of her opportunities with young Armadale (opportunities, by-the-by, which we never calculated on); and that she has been stupid enough to let him slip through her fingers. When I tell you that she is obliged, for the sake of appearances, to go with her father and me to the little entertainments at Thorpe-Ambrose, and to see how young Armadale admires me, you will understand the kind of place I hold in her affections. She would try me past all endurance, if I didn't see that I aggravate her by keeping my temper—so of course I keep it. If I do break out, it will be over our lessons—not over our French, our grammar, history, and globes—but over our music. No words can say how I feel for her poor piano. Half the musical girls in England ought to have their fingers chopped off, in the interests of society—and if I had my way, Miss Milroy's fingers should be executed first.

"As for the major, I can hardly stand higher in his estimation than I stand already. I am always ready to make his breakfast—and his daughter is not. I can always find things for him when he loses them—and his daughter can't. I never yawn when he poses—and his daughter does. I like the poor dear harmless old gentleman; so I won't say a word more about him.

"Well, here is a fair prospect for the future surely? My good Oldershaw, there never was a prospect yet, without an ugly place in it. My prospect has two ugly places in it. The name of one of them is, Mrs. Milroy; and the name of the other is, Mr. Midwinter.

"Mrs. Milroy first. Before I had been five minutes in the cottage, on the day of my arrival, what do you think she did? She sent down stairs, and asked to see me. The message startled me a little—after hearing from the old lady, in London, that her daughter-in-law was too great a sufferer to see anybody—but of course when I got her message, I had no choice but to go upstairs to the sick-room. I found her bedridden with an incurable spinal complaint, and a really horrible object to look at—but with all her woe about her; and, if I am not greatly mistaken, as despicable a woman, with as vile a temper, as I should find anywhere, in all your long acquaintance. Her excessive politeness, and her heaving sorrow-
 face in the shade of the bed-curtains while she contrived to keep calm in the light, put me on my guard; and moment I entered the room, we were more than half an hour together, without my stepping into any one of the

many clever little traps she laid for me. The only mystery in her behaviour, which I failed to see through at the time, was her perpetually asking me to bring her things (things she evidently did not want) from different parts of the room.

"Since then, events have enlightened me. My first suspicions were raised by overhearing some of the servants' gossip; and I have been confirmed in my opinion by the conduct of Mrs. Milroy's nurse. On the few occasions when I have happened to be alone with the major, the nurse has also happened to want something of her master, and has invariably forgotten to announce her appearance by knocking at the door. Do you understand now, why Mrs. Milroy sent for me the moment I got into the house, and what she wanted, when she kept me going backwards and forwards, first for one thing and then for another? There is hardly an attractive light in which my face and figure can be seen, in which that woman's jealous eyes have not studied them already. I am no longer puzzled to know why the father and daughter started, and looked at each other, when I was first presented to them—or why the servants still stare at me with a mischievous expectation in their eyes, when I ring the bell and ask them to do anything: It is useless to disguise the truth, Mother Oldershaw, between you and me. When I went upstairs into that sick-room, I marched blindfold into the clutches of a jealous woman. If Mrs. Milroy can turn me out of the house, Mrs. Milroy *will*—and, morning and night, she has nothing else to do in that bed-prison of hers but to find out the way.

"In this awkward position, my own cautious conduct is admirably seconded by the dear old major's perfect insensibility. His wife's jealousy of him is as monstrous a delusion as any that could be found in a mad-house—it is the growth of her own vile temper, under the aggravation of an incurable illness. The poor man hasn't a thought beyond his mechanical pursuits; and I don't believe he knows at this moment, whether I am a handsome woman or not. With this chance to help me, I may hope to set the nurse's intrusions and the mistress's contrivances at defiance—for a time, at any rate. But you know what a jealous woman is, and I think I know what Mrs. Milroy is; and I own I shall breathe more freely, on the day when young Armadale opens his foolish lips to some purpose, and sets the major advertising for a new governess.

"Armadale's name reminds me of Armadale's friend. There is more danger threatening in that quarter; and, what is worse, I don't feel half as well armed beforehand against Mr. Midwinter, as I do against Mrs. Milroy.

"Everything about this man is more or less mysterious, which I don't like to begin with. How does he come to be in the confidence of the Somersetshire clergyman? How much has that clergyman told him? How is it that he was so firmly persuaded, when he spoke to me in the park, that I was not the Miss Gwilt of whom his friend was in search? I haven't the ghost of an answer to give to any of those three questions.

I can't even discover who he is, or how he and young Armadale first became acquainted. I hate him. No, I don't; I only want to find out about him. He is very young—little and lean, and active and dark, with bright black eyes which say to me plainly, 'We belong to a man with brains in his head and a will of his own; a man who hasn't always been hanging about a country house, in attendance on a fool.' Yes; I am positively certain Mr. Midwinter has done something or suffered something, in his past life, young as he is; and I would give I don't know what to get at it. Don't resent my taking up so much space in writing about him. He has influence enough over young Armadale to be a very awkward obstacle in my way, unless I can secure his good opinion at starting.

"Well, you may ask, and what is to prevent your securing his good opinion? I am sadly afraid, Mother Oldershaw, I have got it on terms I never bargained for. I am[^] sadly afraid the man is in love with me already.

"Don't toss your head, and say, 'Just like her vanity!' After the horrors I have gone through, I have no vanity left; and a man who admires me, is a man who makes me shudder. There was a time, I own—— Pooh! what am I writing? Sentiment, I declare! Sentiment to *you*! Laugh away, my dear. As for me, I neither laugh nor cry; I mend my pen, and get on with my—what do the men call it?—my report.

"The only thing worth inquiring is, whether I am right or wrong in my idea of the impression I have made on him. Let me see—I have been four times in his company. The first time was in the major's garden, where we met unexpectedly, face to face. He stood looking at me, like a man petrified, without speaking a word. The effect of my horrid red hair, perhaps? Quite likely—let us lay it on my hair. The second time was in going over the Thorpe-Ambrose grounds, with young Armadale on one side of me, and my pupil (in the sulks) on the other. Out comes Mr. Midwinter to join us—though he had work to do in the steward's office, which he had never been known to neglect on any other occasion. Laziness, possibly? or an attachment to Miss Milroy? I can't say; we will lay it on Miss Milroy, if you like—I only know he did nothing but look at me. The third time was at the private interview in the park, which I have told you of already. I never saw a man so agitated at putting a delicate question to a woman in my life. But *that* might have been only awkwardness; and his perpetually looking back after me when we had parted, might have been only looking back at the view. Lay it on the view; by all means lay it on the view! The fourth time was this very evening, at the little party. They made me play; and, as the piano was a good one, I did my best. All the company crowded round me, and paid me their compliments (my charming pupil paid *here*, with a *face* like a cat's, just before she *spits*), except Mr. Midwinter. He waited till it was time to go, and then he caught me alone for a moment in the hall. There

was just time for him to take my hand, and say two words. Shall I tell you how he took my hand, and what his voice sounded like when he spoke? Quite needless! You have always told me that the late Mr. Oldershaw doted on you. Just recall the first time he took your hand, and whispered a word or two addressed to your private ear. To what did you attribute his behaviour on that occasion? I have no doubt, if you had been playing on the piano in the course of the evening, you would have attributed it entirely to the music!

"No! you may take my word for it, the harm is done. This man is no malle-pated fool, who changes his fancies as readily as he changes his clothes—the fire that lights those big black eyes of his, is not an easy fire, when a woman has once kindled it, for that woman to put out. I don't wish to discourage you; I don't say the chances are against us. But with Mrs. Milroy threatening me on one side, and Mr. Midwinter on the other, the worst of all risks to run, is the risk of losing time. Young Armadale has hinted already, as well as such a lout can hint, at a private interview! Miss Milroy's eyes are sharp, and the nurse's eyes are sharper; and I shall lose my place if they either of them find me out. No matter! I must take my chance, and give him the interview. Only let me get him alone, only let me escape the prying eyes of the women, and—if his friend doesn't come between us—I answer for the result!

"In the meantime, have I anything more to tell you? Are there any other people in our way at Thorpe-Ambrose? Not another creature! None of the resident families call here, young Armadale being, most fortunately, in bad odour in the neighbourhood. There are no handsome highly-bred women to come to the house, and no persons of consequence to protest against his attentions to a governess. The only guests he could collect at his party to-night were the lawyer and his family (a wife, a son, and two daughters), and a deaf old woman, and her son—all perfectly unimportant people, and all obedient humble servants of the stupid young squire.

"Talking of obedient humble servants, there is one other person established here, who is employed in the steward's office—a miserable, shabby, dissipated old man, named Backwood. He is a perfect stranger to me, and I am evidently a perfect stranger to him; for he has been asking the housemaid at the cottage who I am. It is paying no great compliment to myself to confess it; but it is not the less true that I produced the most extraordinary impression on this feeble old creature the first time he saw me. He turned all manner of colour, and stood trembling and staring at me, as if there was something perfectly frightful in my face. I felt quite startled for the moment,—far of all the ways in which men have looked at me, no man ever looked at me in that way before. Did you ever see the pin-constrictor fed at the Zoological Gardens? They put a live rabbit into his cage, and there is a moment when the two creatures look at each other. I declare Mr. Backwood reminded me of the rabbit!

"Why do I mention this? I don't know why. Perhaps I have

been writing too long, and my head is beginning to fail me. Perhaps Mr. Bashwood's manner of admiring me strikes my fancy by its novelty. Absurd! I am exciting myself, and troubling you about nothing. Oh, what a weary, long letter I have written! and how brightly the stars look at me through the window—and how awfully quiet the night is! Send me some more of those sleeping drops, and write me one of your nice, wicked, amusing letters. You shall hear from me again as soon as I know a little better how it is all likely to end. Good night, and keep a corner in your stony old heart for

"L. G."

3.—*From Mrs. Oldershaw to Miss Gwilt.*

"Diana Street, Pimlico, Monday.

"MY DEAR LYDIA,—I am in no state of mind to write you an amusing letter. Your news is very discouraging, and the recklessness of your tone quite alarms me. Consider the money I have already advanced, and the interests we both have at stake. Whatever else you are, don't be reckless, for heaven's sake!

"What can I do?—I ask myself, as a woman of business, what can I do to help you? I can't give you advice, for I am not on the spot, and I don't know how circumstances may alter from one day to another. Situated as we are now, I can only be useful in one way; I can discover a new obstacle that threatens you, and I think I can remove it.

"You say, with great truth, that there never was a prospect yet without an ugly place in it, and that there are two ugly places in your prospect. My dear, there may be *three* ugly places, if I don't bestir myself to prevent it; and the name of the third place will be—Brock! Is it possible you can refer, as you have done, to the Somersetshire clergyman, and not see that the progress you make with young Armadale will be, sooner or later, reported to him by young Armadale's friend? Why, now I think of it, you are doubly at the parson's mercy! You are at the mercy of any fresh suspicion which may bring him into the neighbourhood himself at a day's notice; and you are at the mercy of his interference the moment he hears that the squire is committing himself with a neighbour's governess. If I can do nothing else, I can keep this additional difficulty out of your way. And, oh, Lydia, with what alacrity I shall exert myself, after the manner in which the old wretch insulted me when I told him that pitiable story in the street! I declare I tingle with pleasure at this new prospect of making a fool of Mr. Brock.

"And how is it to be done? Just as we have done it already, to be sure. He has lost 'Miss Gwilt' (otherwise my housemaid), hasn't he? Very well. He shall find her again, wherever he is now, suddenly settled within easy reach of him. As long as she stops in the place, he will stop in it; and as we know he is not at Thorpe-Ambrose, there you are free of him! The old gentleman's suspicions have given us a great deal of trouble

so far. Let us turn them to some profitable account at last; let us tie him, by his suspicions, to my housemaid's apron-string. Most refreshing. Quite a moral retribution, isn't it?

"The only help I need trouble you for, is help you can easily give. Find out from Mr. Midwinter where the parson is now, and let me know by return of post. If he is in London, I will personally assist my housemaid in the necessary mystification of him. If he is anywhere else, I will send her after him, accompanied by a person on whose discretion I can implicitly rely.

"You shall have the sleeping-drops to-morrow. In the meantime, I say at the end what I said at the beginning—no recklessness! Don't encourage poetical feelings by looking at the stars; and don't talk about the night being awfully quiet. There are people (in Observatories) paid to look at the stars for you—leave it to them. And as for the night, do what Providence intended you to do with the night when Providence provided you with eyelids—go to sleep in it.

"Affectionately yours,

"MARIA OLDERSHAW."

4.—*From the Reverend Decimus Brock to Ozias Midwinter.*

"Boscombe Rectory, West Somerset,

"Thursday, July 3rd.

"MY DEAR MIDWINTER,—One line before the post goes out, to relieve you of all sense of responsibility at Thorpe-Ambrose, and to make my apologies to the lady who lives as governess in Major Milroy's family.

"The Miss Gwilt—or perhaps I ought to say, the woman calling herself by that name—has, to my unspeakable astonishment, openly made her appearance here, in my own parish! She is staying at the inn, accompanied by a plausible-looking man, who passes as her brother. What this audacious proceeding really means—unless it marks a new step in the conspiracy against Allan, taken under new advice—is, of course, more than I can yet find out.

"My own idea is, that they have recognized the impossibility of getting at Allan, without finding me (or you) as an obstacle in their way; and that they are going to make a virtue of necessity by boldly trying to open their communications through me. The man looks capable of any stretch of audacity; and both he and the woman had the impudence to bow when I met them in the village half an hour since. They have been making inquiries already about Allan's mother—here, where her exemplary life may set their closest scrutiny at defiance. If they will only attempt to extort money, as the price of the woman's silence on the subject of poor Mrs. Armadale's conduct in Madeira at the time of her marriage, they will find me well prepared for them beforehand. I have written by this post to my lawyers, to send a competent man to assist me; and he will

stay at the rectory, in any character which he thinks it safest to assume under present circumstances.

"You shall hear what happens in the next day or two.

"Always truly yours,

"DECIMUS BROCK."

CHAPTER XII.

THE CLOUDING OF THE SKY.

NINE days had passed, and the tenth day was nearly at an end, since Miss Gwilt and her pupil had taken their morning walk in the cottage garden.

The night was overcast. Since sunset, there had been signs in the sky from which the popular forecast had predicted rain. The reception-rooms at the great house were all empty and dark. Allan was away, passing the evening with the Milroys; and Midwinter was waiting his return—not where Midwinter usually waited, among the books in the library—but in the little back room which Allan's mother had inhabited in the last days of her residence at Thorpe-Ambrose.

Nothing had been taken away, but much had been added to the room, since Midwinter had first seen it. The books which Mrs. Armadale had left behind her, the furniture, the old matting on the floor, the old paper on the walls, were all undisturbed. The statuette of Niobe still stood on its bracket, and the French window still opened on the garden. But, now, to the relics left by the mother, were added the personal possessions belonging to the son. The wall, bare hitherto, was decorated with water-colour drawings—with a portrait of Mrs. Armadale, supported on one side by a view of the old house in Somersetshire, and on the other by a picture of the yacht. Among the books which bore in faded ink Mrs. Armadale's inscription, "From my father," were other books inscribed in the same handwriting, in brighter ink, "To my son." Hanging to the wall, ranged on the chimney-piece, scattered over the table, were a host of little objects, some associated with Allan's past life, others necessary to his daily pleasures and pursuits, and all plainly testifying that the room which he habitually occupied at Thorpe-Ambrose was the very room which had once recalled to Midwinter the second vision of the dream. Here, strangely unmoved by the scene around him, so lately the object of his superstitious distrust, Allan's friend now waited composedly for Allan's return—and here, more strangely still, he looked on a change in the household arrangements, due in the first instance entirely to himself. His own lips had revealed the discovery which he had made on the first morning in the new house; his own voluntary act had induced the son to establish himself in the mother's room.

Under what motives had he spoken the words? Under no motives which were not the natural growth of the new interests and the new hopes that now animated him.

The entire change wrought in his convictions by the memorable event that had brought him face to face with Miss Gwilt, was a change which it was not in his nature to hide from Allan's knowledge. He had spoken openly, and had spoken as it was in his character to speak. The merit of conquering his superstition was a merit which he shrank from claiming, until he had first unsparingly exposed that superstition in its worst and weakest aspects to view. It was only after he had unreservedly acknowledged the impulse under which he had left Allan at the Mere, that he had taken credit to himself for the new point of view from which he could now look at the Dream. Then, and not till then, he had spoken of the fulfilment of the first Vision, as the doctor at the Isle of Man might have spoken of it—he had asked, as the doctor might have asked, Where was the wonder of their seeing a pool at sunset, when they had a whole network of pools within a few hours' drive of them? and what was there extraordinary in discovering a woman at the Mere, when there were roads that led to it, and villages in its neighbourhood, and boats employed on it, and pleasure parties visiting it? So again, he had waited to vindicate the firmer resolution with which he looked to the future, until he had first revealed all that he now saw himself of the errors of the past. The abandonment of his friend's interests, the unworthiness of the confidence that had given him the steward's place, the forgetfulness of the trust that Mr. Brock had reposed in him, all implied in the one idea of leaving Allan, were all pointed out. The glaring self-contradictions betrayed in accepting the Dream as the revelation of a fatality, and in attempting to escape that fatality by an exertion of free will—in toiling to store up knowledge of the steward's duties for the future, and in shrinking from letting the future find him in Allan's house—were, in their turn, unsparingly exposed. To every error, to every inconsistency, he resolutely confessed, before he attempted to assert the clearer and better mind that was in him—before he ventured on the last simple appeal which closed all, "Will you trust me in the future? will you forgive and forget the past?"

A man who could thus open his whole heart, without one lurking reserve inspired by consideration for himself, was not a man to forget any minor act of concealment of which his weakness might have led him to be guilty towards his friend. It lay heavy on Midwinter's conscience that he had kept secret from Allan a discovery which he ought in Allan's dearest interests to have revealed—the discovery of his mother's room.

But one doubt had closed his lips—the doubt whether Mrs. Armadale's conduct in Madeira had been kept secret on her return to England. Careful inquiry, first among the servants, then among the tenantry, careful consideration of the few reports current at the time, as repeated to him by the few persons left who remembered them, convinced him at last that the family secret had been successfully kept within the family limits. Once satisfied that whatever inquiries the son might make would lead to no disclosure which could shake his respect for his mother's

memory, Midwinter had hesitated no longer. He had taken Allan into the room, and had shown him the books on the shelves, and all that the writing in the books disclosed. He had said plainly, "My one motive for not telling you this before, sprang from my dread of interesting you in the room which I looked at with horror as the second of the scenes pointed at in the Dream. Forgive me this also, and you will have forgiven me all."

With Allan's love for his mother's memory, but one result could follow such an avowal as this. He had liked the little room from the first as a pleasant contrast to the oppressive grandeur of the other rooms at Thorpe-Ambrose—and now that he knew what associations were connected with it, his resolution was at once taken to make it especially his own. The same day, all his personal possessions were collected and arranged in his mother's room—in Midwinter's presence, and with Midwinter's assistance given to the work.

Under those circumstances had the change now wrought in the household arrangements been produced; and in this way had Midwinter's victory over his own fatalism—by making Allan the daily occupant of a room which he might otherwise hardly ever have entered—actually favoured the fulfilment of the Second Vision of the Dream.

The hour wore on quietly as Allan's friend sat waiting for Allan's return. Sometimes reading, sometimes thinking placidly, he wiled away the time. No vexing cares, no boding doubts troubled him now. The rent-day, which he had once dreaded, had come and gone harmlessly. A friendlier understanding had been established between Allan and his tenants; Mr. Bashwood had proved himself to be worthy of the confidence reposed in him; the Pedgifts, father and son, had amply justified their client's good opinion of them. Wherever Midwinter looked, the prospect was bright, the future was without a cloud.

He trimmed the lamp on the table beside him, and looked out at the night. The stable-clock was chiming the half-hour past eleven as he walked to the window, and the first raindrops were beginning to fall. He had his hand on the bell, to summon the servant, and send him over to the cottage with an umbrella, when he was stopped by hearing the familiar footstep on the walk outside.

"How late you are!" said Midwinter, as Allan entered through the open French window. "Was there a party at the cottage?"

"No! only ourselves. The time slipped away somehow."

He answered in lower tones than usual, and sighed as he took his chair.

"You seem to be out of spirits?" pursued Midwinter. "What's the matter?"

Allan hesitated. "I may as well tell you," he said, after a moment. "It's nothing to be ashamed of; I only wonder you haven't noticed it before! There's a woman in it as usual—I'm in love."

Midwinter laughed. "Has Miss Milroy been more charming to-night than ever?" he asked, gaily.

"Miss Milroy!" repeated Allan. "What are you thinking of! I'm not in love with Miss Milroy."

"Who is it, then?"

"Who is it? What a question to ask! Who can it be but Miss Gwilt?"

There was a sudden silence. Allan sat listlessly, with his hands in his pockets, looking out through the open window at the falling rain. If he had turned towards his friend when he mentioned Miss Gwilt's name, he might possibly have been a little startled by the change he would have seen in Midwinter's face.

"I suppose you don't approve of it?" he said, after waiting a little.

There was no answer.

"It's too late to make objections," proceeded Allan. "I really mean it when I tell you I'm in love with her."

"A fortnight since you were in love with Miss Milroy," said the other in quiet, measured tones.

"Pooh! a mere flirtation. It's different this time. I'm in earnest about Miss Gwilt."

He looked round as he spoke. Midwinter turned his face aside on the instant, and bent it over a book.

"I see you don't approve of the thing," Allan went on. "Do you object to her being only a governess? You can't do that, I'm sure. If you were in my place, her being only a governess wouldn't stand in the way with *you*?"

"No," said Midwinter; "I can't honestly say it would stand in the way with me." He gave the answer reluctantly, and pushed his chair back out of the light of the lamp.

"A governess is a lady who is not rich," said Allan, in an oracular manner; "and a duchess is a lady who is not poor. And that's all the difference I acknowledge between them. Miss Gwilt is older than I am—I don't deny that. What age do you guess her at, Midwinter? I say, seven or eight and twenty. What do you say?"

"Nothing. I agree with you."

"Do you think seven or eight and twenty is too old for me? If you were in love with a woman yourself, you wouldn't think seven or eight and twenty too old—would you?"

"I can't say I should think it too old, if——"

"If you were really fond of her?"

Once more there was no answer.

"Well," resumed Allan, "if there's no harm in her being only a governess, and no harm in her being a little older than I am, what's the objection to Miss Gwilt?"

"I have made no objection."

"I don't say you have. But you don't seem to like the notion of it, for all that."

There was another pause. Midwinter was the first to break the silence this time.

"Are you sure of yourself, Allan?" he asked, with his face bent once more over the book; "are you really attached to this lady? Have you thought seriously already of asking her to be your wife?"

"I am thinking seriously of it at this moment," said Allan. "I can't be happy—I can't live without her. Upon my soul, I worship the very ground she treads on."

"How long——?" His voice faltered, and he stopped. "How long," he reiterated, "have you worshipped the very ground she treads on?"

"Longer than you think for. I know I can trust you with all my secrets——"

"Don't trust me!"

"Nonsense! I *will* trust you. There is a little difficulty in the way, which I haven't mentioned yet. It's a matter of some delicacy, and I want to consult you about it. Between ourselves, I have had private opportunities with Miss Gwilt——"

Midwinter suddenly started to his feet, and opened the door.

"We'll talk of this to-morrow," he said. "Good-night."

Allan looked round in astonishment. The door was closed again, and he was alone in the room.

"He has never shaken hands with me!" exclaimed Allan, looking bewildered at the empty chair.

As the words passed his lips the door opened, and Midwinter appeared again.

"We haven't shaken hands," he said, abruptly. "God bless you, Allan! We'll talk of it to-morrow. Good-night."

Allan stood alone at the window, looking out at the pouring rain. He felt ill at ease, without knowing why. "Midwinter's ways get stranger and stranger," he thought. "What can he mean by putting me off till to-morrow, when I wanted to speak to him to-night?" He took up his bedroom candle a little impatiently—put it down again—and, walking back to the open window, stood looking out in the direction of the cottage. "I wonder if she's thinking of me?" he said to himself softly.

She *was* thinking of him. She had just opened her desk to write to Mrs. Oldershaw; and her pen had that moment traced the opening line:—"Make your mind easy. I have got him!"

The English Drama during the Reigns of Elizabeth and James.

PART III.

It is the function of criticism to separate the transient from the permanent, and to show in what consists the true value of the subject which it treats. Therefore, after reviewing the history of our drama, we are led to ask some questions of more general import than those with which we have been occupied. What were the causes of its eminent success? Why did it sink into oblivion? What influence has it exerted over our literature? What place shall we assign to it among the really important products of human genius? In other words, we ask: Were these plays, which seem to most of us so dull and dead, at any time endowed with life and power over men? Did they educate the English, and help to make us what we are? These are the weightiest questions belonging to the subject, more grave than the settling of dates or dubious readings, and less easy to resolve than inquiries into the antiquities of theatres. To some of them we gave a partial answer by endeavouring to prove that the English drama embodied in its works the spirit of the sixteenth century. But it is not enough to show that the playwrights lived in sympathy with their age, and that their poems are of value to historical students. We want to estimate the extent of their influence in forming national character, and of their consequent claim to our respect. In order to do this we must resume some points already partly entertained.

Three things must never be lost sight of: first, that our dramatic literature grew up beneath the patronage of a whole nation; secondly, that the English during the period of its development exhibited no aptitude for painting or the plastic arts; and lastly, that pedantry and superstition were both comparatively absent from our character. The drama, more than any other form of art, requires a national public. We have seen how thoroughly the people and the playwrights sympathised in England. This was not the case with Italy, or France, or Spain. In Italy there was no general sense of nationality. Each little state worked for its own aims, and maintained its own traditions. Among them all no single Athens, with indubitable intellectual pre-eminence, arose to make a focus for Italian arts and sciences. Florence more nearly fulfilled this part than any other city, but she failed to inspire the rest of Italy with that strong feeling of national existence which is necessary for the full perfection of the theatre. This sentiment prevailed in France and Spain, which countries, next to England, have produced the finest modern dramatic poems. But in Spain the power of court etiquette, and of ecclesiastical intolerance, checked

the free display of genius; while France was fettered with academies and pedantic veneration for the antique. Again in Germany the proper conditions for theatrical development were wanting. The municipal and religious interests of the German cities fostered painting, but there was no London to produce a stage. At a later period, when Goethe tried to form a German theatre, he complained bitterly of this defect. The nation had no central interest, no brain, no heart, to which he could appeal.

Again, while all the artistic energies of Italy in the sixteenth century were absorbed in giving *form* to ideas, England had no original or imported art. Even architecture had just ceased to exist. Sculpture, painting, and music occupied the thoughts of the Italians. Poetry was subordinate to these in popular estimation. We may notice this in reading Poliziano's *Orfeo*. It is not a play, but an opera, lyrical, and intended to be sung. Though favourable to the display of decorative skill, and affording themes for music, it is almost destitute of action, dramatic interest, and thought. In England, everything was entirely reversed. Our artists studied the intellectual, instead of the formal expression of ideas. They endeavoured to present an image to the mind, and knew not how to please the eye. We could not boast of one native painter or sculptor. Holbein, our only great naturalized artist, produced portraits almost exclusively. Torrigiano, a second-rate Italian sculptor, visited our barbarous shores to make his fortune, and was off again as soon as possible. The fairest promise could not lure a Florentine beyond Paris: even there he grumbled at inclement skies and savage men. England to them was like Siberia to us, Paris like St. Petersburg. Thus the whole powers of the English intellect were driven in upon themselves. The world of beauty did not lie outside. Poets had to find it in their thoughts, in the study of mankind, and in the dreams of the imagination. This gave depth and intensity to our dramatic writing. It enabled the playwrights to penetrate the deepest places of the soul, and forced them to express themselves through language, for want of any other medium. Such has always been our power. Mr. Matthew Arnold, in a recent paper on the influence of academies, compares the "genius" of the English intellect with French "openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence." The literature of the Elizabethan age he calls a "literature of genius," complaining of the poverty of its results, and pointing to the power and fecundity of that which followed the French "literature of intelligence" in their "great century." Mr. Arnold is, in a measure, right. Ours *was* a literature of genius, which, after Milton, fell into decay. It remains the monument of our peculiar mental power, eccentric and unequal, full of poetry, but deficient in neatness; with more of matter than of style, "of Pan than of Apollo," rough where the French is smooth, fiery where the French glitters, uncooth where the French is elegant; sublime, imaginative, passionate, profound, where Gallic art is graceful, prosaic, rhetorical, and shallow. But he is wrong in accusing the Elizabethan literature of inherent barrenness. The civil war suspended our æsthetical development. A sect averse to arts and letters triumphed, and were followed by a dissolute, half-foreign reign. Political and religious

interests, more grave than those of art, consigned the dramatists and poets of the sixteenth century to oblivion for a time. But, as we shall see, their influence abides. The memory of that age, like the memory of youth and spring, is an element of beauty in the mental life of a people too much given to common things. Its blossoms, too, unlike the pleasures of youth, or the flowers of the spring, are imperishable, and with them every rising poet may crown his forehead.

Thirdly, our dramatists were wholly unfastidious and uncritical in their own tastes, and also unfettered by external authority. The wits of Italy apologized for making use of "il volgare." Their energies were absorbed in scholarship. Poliziano left his *Giostre* unfinished to write the *Miscellanea*, and Tasso pleased all ears by honeyed echoes of Virgilian cadences. English art began when the great effort of scholarship in restoring the classics had been achieved. The antique spirit and blind reverence for Greece or Rome could not weigh us down. Our scholars were not the national poets as in Italy. And our poets were not scholars; or if scholars, they were renegades from the University, preferring London to Cambridge, the theatre to the lecture-room, Bandello and Spanish comedies to Aristotle and Euripides. If Corneille was forced to condemn his *Cid* because it sinned against the unities of the French Academy, while Lope de Vega and Calderon had the Inquisition before their eyes, from both academies and inquisitions the English dramatists were free. To write what they chose so long as they did not blaspheme against religion, libel the Government, or grossly corrupt public taste, was the privilege secured to them by royal letters patent. These men thoroughly understood their trade. Besides, the art of writing plays was in the atmosphere, not acquired in a study, but fostered by the intellectual conditions of the age. It had grown gradually from small beginnings to great results. Successive masters had developed it, each taking from his predecessor what he had to teach. It was then a craft; now it is a taste. The playwrights formed a school. They acquired technical dexterity in their use of language, metaphors, and tricks of trade. They handled subjects by tradition in a dramatic manner. Blank verse rang in their ears. They knew the forms of entrances and exits, the proper mode of introducing underplots, of working up their action to a climax, and of bringing their chief characters into striking situations. It may be observed that in all branches of intellectual industry, wherever technical knowledge is absolutely required as a condition of success, a school springs up. Men of the greatest genius have first to practise their art as a handicraft before they breathe into its forms the breath of their own life. This was eminently the case with respect to Italian painting. Scholars were articulated to Ghirlandajo at Florence, or to Perugino at Perugia. Drawing, the mixing of colours, the use of peculiar preparations, the art of design, the conventional method of treating subjects, formed a technical education which the young artist underwent. The same might be said of Italian and of Greek sculpture, of architecture, and of music. At no time in the world's history, if we except the period of the Homerids and of the Minnesingers, has there been a school of poetry,

because the part of poetry which can be taught is wholly insignificant. For the same reason the greatest philosophers have in modern times received no special training, though Greek science may be said to have followed the rules we have laid down. It is, however, strictly true that wherever Art leans on some external support, wherever it deals with a material, it guins immensely by the foundation of a school. From one great master to another, the torch is carried on. All run in concert to a common aim, and each is emulous of distinction in the course. Nor was our drama an exception from this law. The requirements of theatres, scenes, actors, and audience came to be understood by practice, and the means of satisfying them were capable of being communicated by instruction. Thus dramatic composition in the age of Elizabeth was a trade, but a trade which, like that of sculpture or music, allowed men of genius to detach themselves from the ranks of creditable journey workmen, and which, in their hands, took place among the highest of the arts. Shakspeare stands, where Michel Angelo and Phidias stand, above all rivals; but he owed his dexterity in a great measure to training. Had he been a solitary playwright, he would have left us splendid poems—poems equal, at least, to those of Spenser. But would not their form have been less attractive? could they have failed to lack freedom and resource in the development of human interests? Power over the machinery of Art, and a knowledge of those details which, unless acquired, must hamper the highest genius, are what Shakspeare and Michel Angelo and Phidias owed to the labours of their predecessors and contemporaries.

We are led by these observations to consider another point in the art of our dramatists. During the age in which they flourished there prevailed in England what may be called clairvoyance in dramatic matters. The Greeks and the Italians of the Renaissance possessed clairvoyance in the plastic arts. Our age is clairveyant in science. At each great period of the world's history the human intellect has seen more deeply than at others into the secrets of some particular subject, perceiving intuitively and with ease what before and after it has been unable with much pains to apprehend. In the days of our dramatic supremacy, the nature of man became more wholly the subject of representative poetry than it has ever been at any other time. In the works of Shakspeare and his comrades, the passions, thoughts, and deeds of men are shown to us in a manner so real that Sophocles, Calderon, and Corneille, when compared with them, appear to have represented abstract conceptions or outward forms rather than the inner truths of life. In order to understand the working of this dramatic instinct we might compare the stories on which our dramatists founded their tragedies with the tragedies themselves—*Romeo and Juliet* with the novels of Bandello, or the *Duchess of Malfi* with Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*. It will be seen that, taking up the mere outline of a legend, they have filled it with life, "piercing," to use the words of Milton, "dead things with inbreathed sense." In the old tales from which they drew the subjects of their plays there was plenty of

action but no character, plenty of declamation but no poetry, plenty of sententious maxims but no wisdom. The dramatists knew how to take the framework and to change the spirit of these pieces. They felt that one essential quality of the drama is, that it should not moralize. It requires *doing*, and not talking, as an essential. On the stage, facts, motives, characters, must be seen through, and not described. They must grow and evolve themselves before the eyes of the spectators. The drama has nothing "subjective" in its style. It represents an age of clear perceptions, keen sympathies, and active life; but one that does not meditate upon itself. Therefore our playwrights made action the first point. They sought to lay bare the nature of man, using dramatic incidents as machinery for this purpose. The moral was inferred and secondary. They felt that a play should contain its moral, as the body holds the soul. Both should be one—one form, one being, unexplained. Novels admit of the didactic and reflective vein. What Plato says of the *Epos* may be applied to them. There is one narrator who can pause and interrupt his tale to moralize; but the drama has no narrator, no pause, no moral, except the thought that binds all into unity. As in life we reason upon actions, so in the drama, from what is done before our eyes our moral sense deduces its conclusions. The stage is the world, on a small scale in point of size, but large in point of thought and of the interests which it crowds into a narrow space.

The clairvoyance of our playwrights enabled them to understand the true nature of their art, and to separate instinctively the epic, idyllic or didactic treatment from the dramatic. It also gave them an insight into things beyond their own experience. Shakspeare painted much that he had never seen, and it was true. Many of his persons he must have drawn from his own thoughts or from rare hints. As the skilled anatomist will reconstruct from a single bone an animal long since extinct, so Shakspeare from one trait of character could reason out the whole nature of a man or woman. His fine sense enabled him to argue safely from analogies, and his words varied with unerring discrimination according to the qualities of those through whom he spoke. These powers, in a greater or less degree, were shared by all his fellow-dramatists. Nor did they care for change of time or place. The strangest circumstances seemed familiar to them, keeping as they did firm hold upon their psychological conceptions. An artist of our own time seems only able to describe what he has often seen or felt. He animates his picture with portraits of the few people he has studied. He carefully places them in scenes well known to him. The names of Byron, Shelley, and Miss Brontë instantly suggest this kind of imitative and subjective art. Even Goethe in this respect differed from our dramatists. He never invented a character. He never wandered beyond his own experience—and rightly so, because the tact required to do this faultlessly is lacking in our age. Goethe painted what he saw and painted it like life. Shakspeare knew without seeing what he had to paint, and sympathised with Nature's workmanship so deeply that he caught her craft. In Plato's language,

he had seen the Idea, and all its special manifestations were consequently known to him.

Another point in their clairvoyance was the intense reality which every fact of history possessed for them. There was no barrier of any sort to the free passage of their human sympathies. The men of Greece and Rome, of the Bible, and of chivalrous romance, were equally real to them with the men of their own time, because they neglected mere accidental points of difference, and dwelt upon the common aspects of humanity. We, in the nineteenth century, seem to have forgotten the life and spirit of past ages in our zeal for criticism. Even art we make a vehicle for our historical researches, removing from us far away the facts which we attempt to realize. We endeavour to throw ourselves back several hundred years, and to understand how people then talked and walked and thought. We study their dresses, their language, and the lands they lived in. But their lives we fail to embrace as kindred to our own, and after all our efforts we know more about the upholstery and millinery than about the men of the past. When art was truly vital, painters and poets neglected the outer form and did not waste their thoughts on local colouring. They tried to apprehend the spirit of past men, to think of them as though they were their living teachers, friends, and brothers. The shepherds of the Nativity in miracle-plays were Robin, Dick, and Tom. Julius Cæsar wore the same helmet as Richard the Third and Tamberlaine. Our Lord, in Decker's comedy, is called "the first true gentleman who ever breathed." What indiscriminating critics have complained of as the improprieties and anachronisms of our dramatists really proceeded from the vitality of their conceptions. To them every great event was of eternal significance. The delivery of the law by Moses, for example, would not have seemed to them the action of a Bedouin Arab presenting stone tables at the foot of Sinai to men and women of Semitic countenances. This is how Mr. Herbert has represented the scene with minute attention to ethnological characteristics, geological peculiarities, and propriety of costume. He has obeyed the genius of our century, fixing on the temporal and accidental aspects of his subject and striving after historical rather than spiritual reality. In his effort to see the event as it actually happened he has made us feel its distance and wonder whether it concerned ourselves. The old dramatists would have conceived this fact more as Raphael has conceived it, seeing in it no mere transitory event, no past or special scene of history, and thinking less of the lawgiver, the people, and the mountain, than of the universal value of the law. God in the person of Moses; mankind as represented by the Israelites; the undying significance of an occasion, though in its local details of inferior interest, would have been present to their minds. They lived the life of History. We act charades, masquerading in the garments of the past. These remarks tend only to illustrate the vivid realism of the sixteenth century. They are not meant to throw contempt upon our own spirit, so potent in its criticism, and so comprehensive in its view, which may in time lead even art to a higher realism. It is good for us

meanwhile to keep in mind an energetic style of art quite different from our own, and in the midst of our science and philosophy to contemplate the works of an uncritical but keenly-sighted age.

The truths at which our dramatists aimed in their treatment of history were always psychological. They fixed the mind on personal and domestic rather than upon political events. Here again they showed the delicacy of their instinct by selecting those points only which are common to humanity. It often happens that their knowledge of facts is slight and inaccurate. They form childish conceptions of characters in their public capacity. But always where the passions, aims, and duties of men are to be displayed, we find unerring judgment. Their plays illustrate the consequence of human actions, and, though often written with political and moral purposes, they never seem to embody a theory or to convey prepared instruction. Calderon often preaches sermons in his plays. Webster's arguments against Roman Catholicism consist in the abominable wickedness of the cardinals whom he portrays. Their love of liberty finds vent not in declamations against slavery, nor in exhibitions of political disgrace, but in the picture of a tyrant's private cruelty, licentiousness, and death.

We are here led not unnaturally to consider a question of great importance, what was the moral teaching of the dramatists? Speaking generally, we answer, unexceptionable. They do not indeed distribute rewards to the virtuous and punishment to the vicious; but goodness, though unfortunate, is never pitiable, and wickedness, though triumphant, is never glorious in their plays. Throughout they maintain a tone of manliness. Our sympathy leans to the pure and strong and noble characters. We shrink from the baseness and corruption which are intentionally displayed in all their ugliness. Our moral sense is rarely shocked by doubtful hints and vice made elegant—the sentimentalism of more modern works of fiction. What is bad is bad, and receives no extenuation. What is good is very good, arrayed in native beauty, and shining with imaginative splendour. Yet it cannot be denied that there are exceptions to this healthy influence. Many of Fletcher's, Ford's, and Massinger's plays are founded upon subjects so radically corrupt that the reading of them could scarcely fail to injure an ingenuous mind. Every Elizabethan comedy contains passages of undisguised obscenity, though none are so revolting as those of the Restoration. Even tragedies are, as readers of Shakspeare know, not free from this defilement. These ribald scenes were introduced, we learn from apologies in prologues and epilogues, to suit the lower portions of the audience. No one is obliged to read the clownish jests. They are always mere excrescences upon the action of the plays, and by their plain indecency disgust the taste which might have been perverted by less nauseous exhibitions of impurity. Our ancestors could certainly more "boldly nominate a spade a spade" than we are apt to do. It is a matter of doubt whether their morality was really worse than ours. But in the progress of civilized society the intellectual sense becomes so sharpened that words, which once were words, in course of time affect us like the very things they signify.

Against the wickedness of the drama the Puritans waged war, and the playwrights parried their attacks by satires. It seems certain that theatres were the resort of the lowest persons, and that a continual noise disturbed their neighbourhood. The inhabitants of Blackfriars petitioned the Privy Council against Burbage when he tried to build a playhouse in their quarter. The Lord Mayor cancelled the Queen's patent to Lord Leicester's company by refusing to admit the actors to the city, on account of the idle and profligate rabble which they drew together, and of the fighting, thievery, and drunkenness of which playhouses were the centre. Puritan divines preached constantly against them. Archbishop Grindall tried to suppress theatres altogether. Another prelate called them "schools of vice, dens of thieves, and theatres of all lewdness," from the pulpit of St. Paul's. Gosson, Stubbes, Northbrooke, Prynne, Collier, and many others kept up a war of books and pamphlets against their corruption of the youth. But though it was clear that theatres encouraged profligacy, Elizabeth and James were far from listening to the vehement abuse of them by Puritan memorialists. To institute a censorship of plays, to restrain unlicensed companies from acting, to confine them to the neighbourhood of the metropolis, to forbid their playing on Sundays, and to make the use of oaths or of the name of God in dramatic compositions penal, were the utmost measures that either of these sovereigns could be got to take against theatrical exhibitions. Elizabeth seems to have understood the utility of plays as means of education, and to have fostered the tastes of the people in this direction. Even in the reign of Edward VI. their influence over popular opinion had been recognized. In 1549 plays and interludes were forbidden as seditious, for political rather than for religious reasons. Mary restricted the representation of plays tending to advance the spread of Protestant doctrines, while she caused miracles and mysteries to be performed in favour of Catholicism. Elizabeth on ascending the throne reversed these edicts by putting a stop to all religious exhibitions, while she organized the secular drama, and took it under her especial patronage. Indeed, the theatres became in her reign a centre of popular instruction, a school of patriotic principles, where all the nation heard the praise of civil and religious liberty. However pernicious in detail may have been the subjects of some plays, and however flagrant the abuses to which theatres gave rise, yet the good they did must have outbalanced the evil. Here the people learned to love their Queen and to hate slavery. They saw before their eyes the deeds of patriots and heroes. The horrors of bad government, the corruptions of the priestly rule, and the blessings of a free state, were shown them in such characters as they could plainly comprehend. Poets, orators, and scholars poured forth their learning, eloquence, and imagery to represent to Englishmen the glories of their land. The want of a national epic was supplied by those dramatic scenes in which Crecy, Agincourt, and Arthur lived again. If the ballad of Chevy Chase stirred Sir Philip Sidney like the blast of a trumpet, how must these lines have roused the valour of an English audience:—

Agincourt, Agincourt !
 Know ye not Agincourt ?
 Where the English slew and hurt
 All the French foemen !
 With our guns and bills brown,
 Oh ! the French were beat down,
 Morris pikes and bowmen !

Even now we cannot read the dying words of Gaunt without profound emotion :—

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
 This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
 This other Eden, demi-Paradise,
 This fortress, built by Nature for herself,
 Against infestation and the hand of war ;
 This happy breed of men, this little world ;
 This precious stone set in the silver sea,
 Which serves it in the office of a wall,
 Or as a moat defensive to a house,
 Against the envy of less happier lands ;
 This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
 This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
 This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
 Dear for her reputation through the world—

Reading this, we are obliged to break off from want of breath. Words and ideas follow and repeat each other in a passionate succession of intense earnestness. Nor was it only to patriotism and to the sense of liberty that they were raised. Heywood draws a picture of Tragedy, in his *Apology for Actors*, disrowned, disgraced, yet still a queen, upbraiding him with the ingratitude of his times :

Have I not whipped Vice with a scourge of steel,
 Unmasked stern Murder, shamed lascivious Lust,
 Plucked off the visor from grim Treason's face ?

Heywood, warning at her just complaint, takes up the pen and argues in this fashion for the moral value of the stage :—" A description is only a shadow, received by the ear, but not perceived by the eye ; so lively portraiture is merely a form seen by the eye, but can neither show action, passion, motion, nor any other gesture to move the spirits of the beholder to admiration ; but to see a soldier shaped like a soldier, walk, speak, act like a soldier ; to see a Hector all besmeared in blood, trampling upon the bulks of kings ; . . . to see, as I have seen, Hercules in his own shape hunting the boar . . . and lastly on his high pyramids writing *Nil ultra* ! Oh, these were sights to make an Alexander !"

Turning to his own land :—" What English blood, seeing the person of any bold Englishman presented, and doth not hug his fame, and hunny at his valour, pursuing him in his enterprise with his best wishes, and as being wrapt in contemplation, offers to him in his heart all prosperous performance, as if the personator were the man personated ?"

Speaking of historical plays :—" If we present a foreign history, the subject is so intended that in the lines of Romans, Grecians, or others, either the virtues of our countrymen are extolled or their vices reprov'd."

Massinger, in his play of *The Roman Actor*, makes Paris argue in the same style for the lofty vocation of his art. It is clear from these sentences alone, if it were not abundantly proved by every scene in every play written at that period, that the English stage exercised a most powerful influence over the development of our national character. It inflamed the souls of statesmen, scholars, warriors, seamen, poets, and philosophers, with an ardent love of liberty, and a sense of moral greatness and personal responsibility, and an enthusiastic admiration for works of intellectual power. Reading the plays of Shakspeare, Marlowe, Jonson, Fletcher, Marston, Heywood, Decker, Chapman, and others, makes one cry with Milton :—"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation raising herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday flame; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisma." Even the Puritans, who hated plays, must have been thankful for their influence, when they exchanged their character of private sanctimoniousness for one of public patriotism. Then they found in the people a nobility of spirit and dauntless familiarity with speculations of the boldest kind, and a deeply rooted zeal for freedom, fostered by the theatres. These obligations remained, however, unrecognized. Perhaps even now we are only beginning to acknowledge them. The drama had done its work—its vigour was exhausted. Every day it became less pure, and more subservient to the pleasures of a luxurious court. The Puritans swept it all away; and when the stage revived with Charles the Second it had changed its character. No good can be expected from the plays of the Restoration. Our theatre was no longer national; its function in England had been great; but it had accomplished that function; it had helped to cherish a strong sense of nationality, to educate the people by introducing into our island the ideas which agitated Europe at the time, to produce a truly original school of Art, and lastly, to develop the resources of our language. On most of these points we have already dwelt. But the last requires some patient consideration. Heywood, in the pamphlet from which we have already quoted, adduces, among other arguments in favour of the stage, that through its means English had been raised "from the most rude and unpolished tongue" to being "a most perfect and composed language." Each playwright, he tells us, tried to discover fresh beauties of rhythm and expression, and to leave the dialect more pliable and fertile for his successors. It is remarkable that the dramatists themselves were conscious of this noble emulation. Like the painters of Italy, they worked in concert, each maintaining his own place, each profiting by past experience, each dealing with a material plastic in his hands and susceptible of infinite modification.

Thus, during the half-century in which our drama lived, English

became a language capable of expressing exquisite and various thoughts. It was no longer a rude Saxon dialect, holding in suspension fragments of Latin and French : but all its elements were fused into a vital whole. We cannot attribute this change entirely to the drama. Yet if we compare the poetry of that period with contemporary prose compositions, it will be clear that while they started nearly on a par, the prose style remained quaint, crabbed, unmelodious and stiff, while the language of the playwrights had become versatile, musical, and dignified. Even the prose writing of the stage was among the best then going. Lyly, first of English authors, produced true Attic prose. Nor is it possible to calculate the influence exerted by poetry over the splendid theological rhetoricians of the next century. The capabilities of English were exercised in every department by dramatic writing. For the purposes of conversation it had to assume an epigrammatic terseness. In description of scenery, or in the eloquent outpourings of passion, it expressed thoughts difficult to seize and delicate gradations of feelings. Sometimes sustained declamation was required : at others the most light and graceful play of fancy had to be conveyed in passages of lyric elegance. Different characters gave different shades of meaning to the words they used ; yet every sentence had the polish of a work of art. And throughout all changes the artist was obliged to continue clear and capable of being comprehended by an untutored audience. These were the general results of dramatic composition in its influence over the growth of language. It must also be remembered that the genius of each author developed a new aspect of the Proteus. The fluent grace of Heywood, the sweet sentiment of Decker, Marston's pregnant sentences, the dreamlike charm of Fletcher's melody, Marlowe's "mighty line," Webster's depth of pathos and heart-quaking bursts of passion, Jonson's gravity, Massinger's smooth-sliding eloquence, Ford's glittering declamation, and the style of Shakspeare, which embraces all—as some great organ holds all instruments within its many stops—these remained as monuments of composition to succeeding ages. Who shall estimate what they have done for us ? Our ancestors sat in the theatres and heard them all. Their ears became accustomed to this variety of music, their intellects impregnated with divers modes of thought. Besides, the vocabulary was nearly doubled by this use of language. Shakspeare is said to have 15,000, while the Old Testament contains 5,642 words. The drama collected all the floating forms of popular speech, together with the technical phraseology of trades and of the schools, and stereotyped them in literature ; so that instead of being satisfied with the meagre and artificial diction of the Popian age, we may return to those "pure wells of English undefiled," and from their inexhaustible springs refresh our language when it seems to fail. In brief, the Elizabethan literature remains a permanent reservoir of liberal thoughts and vigorous idioms, a model of energetic style, and a mine of words. It is good for us to turn from the wrought "Corinthian" elegance of our contemporary poetry to the broad and natural beauty of those authors. Poets like Keats, inspired by a reaction against prevailing canons, will always find in them the serenity of Parnassus.

Their faults again are not our faults, nor are we likely to be led astray by them.

Nor must it ever be forgotten that the drama, in its effort after self-emanipation, created the great pride of English poetry—blank verse. No language, except Greek, has possessed a metre so powerful and capable of infinite variety as this. The Greek iambic for dramatic composition, and the Greek hexameter for epic, are perfect. But the English blank verse, or “licentiate iambic,” as it has been called by an old author, combines the excellences of these metres. When we examine the Italian *terza rima* and the French *Alexandrine*, we see at once how the elaborate rhyming system of the one and the languid movement of the other render them unfit for the freest poetical expression. The blank verse of Germany, compared with ours, is as yet monotonous and tame. It never underwent the rigorous exercise which our dramatic writers gave this metre in the sixteenth century, and by which they brought out all its elasticity and force. Marlowe, when he began to write for the stage, found a rhyming couplet in common use. This was tedious and hampering. It prevented the proper development of character, and encouraged a false style of moralizing declamation. A few authors were employing what Nash described as “the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse” and “the spacious volubility of a drumming decasyllabon;” by which he meant to indicate a languid five-foot metre differing in nothing from the old couplet, except in the absence of rhyme. The people did not care for it, and the poets of the rhyming school looked upon it with disfavour. Marlowe saw its capabilities. He broke it up by introducing pauses of different lengths, by occasionally throwing in an extra syllable, or cutting the line short, by beginning with a trochee when variety was needed, and by substituting for the jingling rhyme a subtle system of alliterative melody and carefully balanced periods. Marlowe’s line became the basis of all English composition in blank verse. His opponents gave way at once, and adopted the new discovery. Succeeding poets altered it, and stamped their own peculiarities upon the metre. But to him belongs the glory of its creation. During the interregnum of bad taste, which began with the Restoration, and prevailed until the first years of this century, a return was made to the rhyming decasyllabic couplet. Milton, it is true, protested against rhyme as being “the invention of a barbarous age to set off wretched matter and lame metre.” He, however, belonged to the past golden age, “and dwelt apart.” It will be remembered that when Dryden wished to versify the *Paradise Lost* in his own couplet, the old poet only said, “Let the young man tag his rhymes.” In the nineteenth-century renaissance of our literature, Shelley, Coleridge, Keats, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning have again vindicated the superiority of blank verse, and affiliated the style of our poetry to its true Elizabethan parentage. It might also be remarked in passing that the old dramatic spirit of our forefathers has reappeared in the fertility and power exhibited by contemporary novelists.

We have thus briefly and imperfectly reviewed some of those points which give a permanent importance to our dramatic literature. Those

who care for poetry for its own sake will always look with reverence upon the English authors of that period. But our age is only satisfied with wrought gold. The dramatists are too bombastic, diffuse, improbable, prosaic in part, and in part licentious, to suit our taste, and unfortunately there are very few of us who have a genuine love of art. It always was the "youngest song" which charmed the listener's ear. Therefore the few who like to wile away an hour with poetry read Tennyson. Besides, our traditional homage is yielded to Shakspeare. He stands for the authors of his age as Handel represents the past of vocal music. This must always be the case, and justly so; for Shakspeare was the greatest poet of his time, if not of *all* time. Still it is right that students of literary history should now and then remind the general reader that the other playwrights of his age were no mean men. Not very long ago the name of Shakspeare was almost forgotten. By degrees admirers disinterred his works, and spoke of him as if he had been born like Pallas from the brain of Jupiter. Johnson paid a surly homage to his power, but of his contemporaries he said that "they were sought after because they were scarce, and would not have been scarce had they been much esteemed." At length Malone began to hint that other authors of great merit laboured with Shakspeare in the days of his pre-eminence. Doddsley published twelve volumes of old plays. Gifford subsequently spent pains upon the text of some of them. Later on they became "the rage" in a certain set. Coleridge and Hazlitt lectured on their plays. Lamb made selections which he enriched with careful notes. The *Retrospective Review* published notices of the more obscure authors. Since those days, Mr. Dyce, Hartley Coleridge, Mr. Halliwell, Mr. Wright, and others have edited the scattered works of different dramatists, with antiquarian zeal and critical ability; while Mr. J. P. Collier has illustrated by his industry and learning the theatrical annals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Still we do not yet possess a complete history of the English stage, or a "full abstract" of its great productions, though the Germans have several, and a Frenchman has lately produced one of considerable merit. Speaking of this national want, De Quincey uses the following words, which eloquently sum up all that we have tried to say: "No literature, not excepting even that of Athens, has ever presented such a multiform theatre, such a carnival display, mask and antemask, of impassioned life—breathing, moving, acting, suffering, laughing:

Quicquid agunt homines—votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia, discursus.

—All this, but far more truly and more adequately than was or could be effected in that field of composition which the gloomy satirist contemplated, whatsoever in fact our mediæval ancestors exhibited in the 'Dance of Death,' drunk with tears and laughter, may here be reviewed, scenically grouped, draped, and gorgeously coloured. What other national drama can pretend to any competition with this?"

The Famous Quire of Earndale.

WHEN, fifteen years ago, I was inducted to the Rectory of Earndale, the parish church possessed a famous quire. Not that the quire of Earndale differed much from that almost obsolete type which fifteen years ago it was deemed the young churchman's duty to extirpate on first donning the white tie. It was a famous quire, which every year—once or twice in the year—strangers would come to listen to. It consisted of but five men, one of whom played a clarionet with bold, firm tone, that sustained the treble, and gave confidence to the crack-voiced boys and rough-voiced girls who hardly stood in need of encouragement. Another played a violoncello, to which he had attached a fifth string tuned to F F, in order to add sonority to the deeper bass. A third performer played the flute, on which he executed the counter-tenor part as it was written for him in the G clef, *above* the treble or air. Of the remaining two men, one sang the air with the clarionet, only an octave lower, and the last sang the bass. But besides this, the violoncello player sang bass, tenor, or air, or counter-tenor in a screaming falsetto, one part or the other as he deemed it necessary to ornament or support the service of song.

Such was the Quire of Earndale; they sang pluckily, and made a cheerful, if not a melodious noise. I gave them supper once a year, but could not induce them to adopt more ecclesiastical music than glees and songs set to sacred words. Still, we were better off than the Meeting, where they all sang in discordant chorus, while the parson played the big fiddle in the pulpit. Like other things in Earndale, the quire was an institution, and I did not attempt to remove it.

But after five years, clarionet left the valley, and we began to feel symptoms of dissolution. Flute wouldn't play the air, it was so tame; and when remonstrated with, withdrew and carried off tenor with him to the Meeting. Still we had a sturdy voice for the air, and the rural "master of song." But alas! the master, always fond of drink, became so uproarious that we were obliged to dismiss him. The crisis came when a stranger was taking duty for me. A new tune of Abel's own composing was to be sung, one full of eccentric turns and intricate distances. The quire made a start, quavered, and broke down. Abel sounded the note anew, and again they broke down: this time a pause. "Let us pray," said the officiating clerk, meekly. "Pray be blowed!" shouted Abel. "Let's try again." It was Abel's last Sunday of office.

For some Sundays we tried congregational singing, our one remaining voice, with the help of a pitch-pipe, leading the tune; but bit by bit the congregation grew tired of a duty which had always devolved upon paid

officials, and many a tune was sung by good old Jamie and the children, —he with spectacles on nose and book in hand—while the other hand, hooked in his red waistcoat, beat time on his breast to the tune: save when, in some pathetic verse, it was released to cuff some youngster who gave tongue too lustily, and didn't appreciate the "temper" of the strain. Then in our perplexity we procured a small barrel-organ, which had seen service in a room used for dancing on week-days, and service on Sundays. It was a peculiar instrument: the first time we tried it, it went off like a musical snuff-box, and played all the tunes successively, including a walse and "Merrily Danced the Quaker's Wife." Earndale has not forgotten that Sunday yet. The wardens and sexton managed to carry it out (it was not large) into the churchyard, but even there it fired away tune after tune amid the snow and cold, till all the machinery was unwound. Before the next Sunday we had it put in order, but it seldom went right. Sometimes the wires just elevated the keys high enough to let a portion of the wind into the pipes, producing mournful whines like key-hole music; sometimes, from want of pinning the barrel, it wound from one tune into another with marvellous dexterity; sometimes the wires were bent, and discord harsh and strong grunted and thundered in one line, while in the next, for half a line, was a vacuum of notes of any sort. At last we understood it better, and congregational singing in some sort actually was inaugurated.

Like most old churches, Earndale had suffered under the beautifying furor of the eighteenth century: whitewash, a ceiling, large square pews,—one description serves for all. Far be it from our sober criticism to join in the outcry against that age; what would have remained of our old churches without such "beautification?" At all events it preserved them to us, and probably in a more seemly state than they have been since the wars of the Roses.

Earndale church had suffered in the process; rood-screen, chancel, arch, reredos, was gone; some windows were square, some circular, some Grecian, and there was an urn in each corner, and a sun-dial over the door. We began to restore; and little by little replaced arch and screen and window, chancel and oak-roof; seated the nave afresh, and quarrelled over the seats, as churchmen will to eternity. We paid our bills. The church was a seemly one; and we began to think it was not quite the thing for the district chapel of Oatgate to glory in a finger-organ, while we ground music on a barrel.

So we formed a committee, Farmer Jolly, our churchwarden, in the chair. We ordered a new organ,—a handsome instrument: "plenty of music in it," was old Jolly's instruction to the builder. The subscriptions didn't quite make up the cost, but then committees never look at that insignificant item, and we resolved to open the organ with *solat*, and have a collection.

A week or so before the day, a deputation of the ladies of my parish called at the rectory with a mission to the rector. I am a man

of simple and retired habits. I felt nervous on hearing it was a deputation of ladies, but was greatly relieved to read on the cards the names of Miss Fanny Peaflower and Miss Bessy Floskin, two of the youngest young ladies in Earndale, both very musical, both pets of the rector from childhood,—and knew it too. I suspected they had some deep scheme in their pretty heads, but all the same was infinitely glad that they, and not the widow, my Lady Topsticks—who always talks on pathetic topics, goes to balls and can't come to church—or Miss Stiers, whose conversation is learned or religious,—had been chosen to represent the ladies of Earndale. I don't think I abuse confidence if I say that all the pretty speeches they could frame, and all the charming looks they could put on, were on that morning forthcoming, just to fathom the temper in which their errand would be received. They managed their mission adroitly. The ladies of Earndale, as I knew, were fond of music, and they had often heard me say that church music ought to be more cultivated than it is, and they wished very much—they were sure I should not object—to celebrate the opening of the organ with a choral service.

"Choral service!" exclaimed I, astonished, "and where is the quire to be found? You wouldn't have old Jamie and the school-children attempt it?"

No; the ladies would undertake that duty, come and sit in the chancel, and sing all the responses. "And, do you know, we have practised so much, we can do it perfectly."

"But how can you manage," said I, "without male voices? Your small sweet notes will sound angelic, and all too unearthly."

"Oh, there's young Seabody, and half-a-dozen more who have attended *all* the practices."

"I'll be bound they have. Why didn't you let me come, young ladies!"

"We wished to give you a surprise."

"And so you do," replied I.

"But really now, if you will consent, we all wish it so; and it's only once! The Bishop can't write aggravating letters when all we want is to pass the day off creditably, and get a good subscription."

With such pure motives, urged by such lips, what could I do? Of course I yielded; and then—just as I had showed them round my garden, and gathered my most beautiful roses for them, and they were bidding me good-by—"And oh, Mr.—, I had almost forgot,—will you intone the service?"

No, no; I knew better than that. What voice I might have had ten years ago was exhausted in lifting up, Sunday after Sunday, the category of my people's sins.

Then would I allow the curate of the new church, who sang tenor beautifully, to take the service?

O Earndale, how cruel! Here I had asked a dignitary to preach, and had a surplice, new starched and clean, lying in my study for

my part ; and to be done out of it by two young ladies ! and for that puppy Augustus Claighfern, in high-collared coat and cassock tie, just come from Oxford, and great at all the evening parties, and always following Fanny Peaflower ! O Earndale ! far better thy rector's wishes were not uttered then—nor chronicled now. They were not clerical !

In the end they prevailed on me to let Augustus intone, and content myself with the lessons. There was, however, another party besides the rector to be won over, and that a party not so easily coaxed out of its whims and prejudices. At the head of it was Farmer Jolly ; at the bottom of it—the soul of all the mischief it perpetrated—Miss Stiers. Rich and decided, she hated Puseyite ways ; and old Jolly was persuaded we were all to become perverts to Romanism in the lump, against our will, just as the Sepoys fancied they were to be christianized surreptitiously by biting the greased cartridge. He came with reproachful civility, and lent me a folio Book of Martyrs with pictures of the cruelties of the Inquisition. Mrs. Jolly gave me an account of a visit she made to hear such a choral service elsewhere, and couldn't abide it. " It had such a Popish twang in it—that way of doing the service." And the worst of it was, that I, the rector—no party to the thing except by implication—had to smooth all these difficulties. Well, there was only one way. Lady Topsticks asked the Misses Jolly to one or two evening parties, and that quieted the Jollys ; and Miss Stiers was, without much persuasion, coaxed into a promise to attend a Penny Reading in the school-room in the evening of the day of our Festival, and to read herself—to a distinguished and educated audience, with all the pathos of a poetic soul—the laureate's last poem.

Then for a week the church was thronged from morn to eve ; all the ladies and young men came to decorate it. Large placards with suitable inscriptions were nailed and stuck round with flowers ; the pillars wound with wreaths ; the windows crowned with garlands ; and primroses, cowslips, every flower of spring, were gathered from hedgerow, garden, and greenhouse, and tastefully appropriated. The young gentlemen were very busy, and so were the young ladies. I fear their conduct was not exactly in all respects suitable to the place they worked in. But then, as Charley Seabody said : " How can you help Bonnie Bessie Floskin down the ladder, and only look good ? "

At last the day was come. It was a beautiful morning. I went early in the dawn to the top of Earndale Scar, and watched the tide-waves roll in under the early sunshine, flashing like the wings of a silver dove. Not a sign of rain. We were to have a fine May-day ; and for a collection, let me tell you, a fine day is no despicable power.

The service was at eleven, but long before eleven a large flag waving, and peals one after the other clashing out from the tower, reminded Earndale of what no one stood in danger of forgetting. As the time drew near, carriage after carriage rolled up, clustered with fair faces ; and

dashing riders and visitors from all the valley trooped in. Earndale for once was gay. There were carriages left standing without their horses on the green; there were little knots of well-dressed people wandering about; there were the orderly lines of the school-children, and disorderly crowds of the truants gathering round the nut-sellers, who brought their merchandise as near the temple as they dared; there was the organ-builder—a proud man—come from London on purpose to be present, and to be paid; there was the dignitary in cassock and band; and Augustus, who stepped out of a drag, arrayed in dusty canonical costume, with a square cap such as Earndale never spied before, and thought it some new fashion.

My duty required me to attend these gentlemen, so we proceeded through the church-yard full of on-lookers, and through the aisles, then beginning to fill; the churchwarden and sidesmen, busy and anxious and important, at a loss what to do with cantankerous Earndalers who would occupy their own seats that day, and not make room for full-pursed visitors.

In the chancel was our quire, as fair a sight as ever was seen when men-singers and women-singers served the service of song in the temple. A row of ladies sate on each side, and the young fellows in white ties behind them: all of both sexes, I observed (what I never saw before), for once looking serious.

I had objected to their processioning to their seats: country people might have mistaken it for another ceremony in which young ladies take part at the altar. Then in the vestry I was obliged to use strong language to induce Augustus to replace in his bag—(a blue one like a brief bag)—a stole of white satin with crosses of gold and scarlet beautifully inwrought, and with which he was tastefully arraying his lawn-enveloped shoulders.

Eleven o'clock! clash went the bells all together in a sudden explosion, and then were still, their several harmonic tones sobbing and dying away in dissonance. We sallied forth, and the organ discoursed triumphant music.

Augustus was nervous; he didn't keep his note, and sometimes made desperate hits at distances, and only arrived within three-quarters of a tone. Then the quire was disconcerted; only the organist picked them up so deftly that most people thought it was all right. The performance on the whole was creditable, only it was nothing else but a performance. Old Jolly alone made an ill-natured remark. His daughter Emily wondered how Mr. Augustus Claighfern could chant at all without his stole: "As if a tom-cat couldn't purr without his tail. It was the ladies that dashed him."

After this, I thought we should have nothing but harmony in Earndale. Alas! three weeks had not passed before grim Miss Stiers (who had only the little boys and the rector for her audience) came with a long story of the wicked and profane doings of the quire. Charley

Somebody had been seen by somebody who didn't attend to the service, busy with the golden gay ringlets of Fanny Peaflower (the little flirt! she knew Augustus couldn't be there on Sunday!) behind the organ curtain. Miss Stiers thought it atrocious. So did not I, but then I felt it a duty to say something, and put it to Charley whether he hadn't better sit away from the organ. "Oh, no, he was wanted to draw the stops;" and the young scamp went and told the whole parish that the rector was jealous, and stories and fables of every hue were concocted and circulated in consequence, and I had to request them both to sit with their mammas.

Then our volunteer organists began to quarrel, and some who could play wouldn't play; and others who couldn't play would play, and oftentimes hit the wrong keys, which cried lustily in reply; or made harmony with two fingers only, and oftentimes anything but harmony. At last, unkindest cut of all, came a letter from the Bishop. The proceedings in Earndale had for some time past occupied his attention: the flower decorations—the choral performance—the improper proceedings—and, in consequence, remarks of parishioners about the rector; and, what grieved his episcopal soul to the quick, the unauthorized practice of singing a response, which for generations Earndale had heard read. "Peccavi; peccavi," was all I could reply. "My new organ, instead of harmony, produces nothing but discord."

From that day I dare not think about music in Earndale, far less record my impressions. We have musical parties, but I shrink to the very farthest corner of the room, and dare not applaud Emily Jolly, or Fanny Peaflower, or Bessie Floskin, in a song, or express my abhorrence of bacchanalian glees, lest I should be saddled with personal feelings; and when on Sundays I hear the organ tapped like a pianoforte, I groan to myself, and wish for "the famous quire of Earndale," with its clarionet, flute, and violoncello.

The Profession of Advocacy.

To assert, in these days, the vital importance of a pure administration of justice—the gravity of the part played with regard thereto by barristers—the immense influence exercised, by public opinion upon men's actions for good and for evil, would be to proclaim anew truths which have long since become truisms. Yet, strange to say, these truisms point to a truth which has been scarcely regarded. What recognition do we find of the fact that the popular notions as to the duties of barristers ought to be just and clear? When we find the extremest and most opposite views commonly held, many (and those not all of the gentler sex) upholding a theory which would make barristers the knights-errant of the law, the business of whose lives it should be to seek out injured innocence wherever it is to be found, whilst others talk as though their duty were to be verdict-getters *purs et simples*, getters of verdicts, judgments, decrees, for any and every client, by any and every means in their power, short only of actual crime, how can we suppose that the truth in question has received recognition and assent? Yet, if it be expedient that barristers should be watched in the exercise of their profession by an enlightened public opinion, it is by necessary implication expedient that the popular notions as to the duties of that profession should be just and clear. For that thing of so great power and might, which men call public opinion, is not the opinion of a few public writers; their praise and their censure are powerless so long as it is only their own praise, their own censure: public opinion really consists in the opinion of the great mass of individuals who constitute that factitious whole, the public. According as any great proportion of the latter concur in sound and healthy views, or concur in views that are unsound and lax in their unsoundness, or concur in views that are unsound but impracticable, or in no views at all of any clearness, so will the influence of public opinion be salutary, pernicious, or null. Is it, then, expedient that barristers should be watched in the performance of their duties by an enlightened public opinion? Or is this guarantee rendered superfluous by the character of these duties, or by the control to which they are already subject?

Now, if the verdict-getting theory of an advocate's office were the right one—if it were true (as some assert, not merely in loose talk, but gravely as a deliberate proposition) that an advocate has nothing whatever to do with the right or wrong of the cause committed to him—nothing whatever to do with the right or wrong of the means by which it is to succeed—nothing to do but to welcome the client, to know no person in the world save him, and to reckon all things subordinate to his interests—

it would certainly be a mistake to talk of extending to barristers the influence of public opinion: they would have a sufficient guiding and controlling power in the direct impulse of self-interest. But when, on a recent occasion, this theory was propounded before a great assembly of barristers by one who, to many other claims upon all men's respect and admiration, adds those of unwearying philanthropy, the silence with which the *dictum* was received, and the applause—the warm, enthusiastic applause that welcomed the assertion by a less eminent speaker of the contrary doctrine, that it is the duty of an advocate to uphold his client's interests *per fas*, but not *per nefas*, by fair but not by unfair means, by right but not by wrong—this applause and that silence testified pretty strongly to the general feeling of the bar. And it is not to be supposed that an undoubtedly able set of men reject unnecessarily a theory which would allow them to pay a greater regard to their own interests. We cannot, therefore, if we would, escape the conclusion that a barrister is *not* by duty to his client absolved from duty to all the world beside, that he must distinguish between fair and unfair means of supporting the cause entrusted to him; and we may pass on to consider whether there are or are not sufficient guarantees that he shall resort only to such means as are fair.

Now, at the outset of this inquiry, let it be remarked, that a barrister not only is invested by law with a very wide discretion as to what is fair and what is unfair in any particular case—for the abuse of which discretion he neither is nor can be punished by any material penalties—but, moreover, always *must* be so invested and always must remain so free from liability to punishment. The truth of this will appear upon a little consideration. He is and clearly must be entrusted with a wide discretion not only as to what causes he will undertake, but also as to the means by which he will support them when undertaken: rules of evidence cannot prevent his bullying an honest witness out of his five wits; you cannot have rules of argument which shall prevent malignant and gratuitous insinuations against the character of his opponents, or a coarse handling of topics which touch us all most nearly, or the creating, by means of sophistry, an impression which not always the vigilance of those whose duty it is to guard against it can do away with. And though in each of these cases the consequences may be most disastrous, yet the character of the offence is such, the evidence of it is so difficult to obtain, that it always must remain unpunished—*save* by opinion. For evidence which is insufficient to justify the infliction of any positive penalty may be amply sufficient to justify suspicion, and the fear of so suffering in opinion is and always must be the one check upon a barrister. This being so, the whole question as to the advisability of barristers being watched by an enlightened public opinion resolves itself into this, whether the fear of professional opinion is or can be sufficient.

That it is sufficient, few will maintain. It is, therefore, more material to consider why it is not.

In the first place, it must not be forgotten that there has been of late years a vast increase in the numbers of the profession. The weakening effect of this upon the power of moral control was pointed out by Justice Talfourd twenty years ago—in an essay on Lord Eldon and Lord Stowell in the *Quarterly Review* for December, 1844—and the remark would certainly not have less force now-a-days. Again it should be remembered that, in more ways than one, the opinion of the bar necessarily touches least those who need its restraining influence most. Men of doubtful character, if on circuit, are generally either never admitted to the bar mess or are subsequently excluded from it, and while free to continue their professional practice and malpractices, have no associates whose good-will they need fear to forfeit. Or, worse still, they form a class apart, herding together in those courts the business of which is most distasteful to men of feeling and refinement. In such an atmosphere the trickster and the bully quickly grow to rank perfection. And the men who most need the restraints of professional opinion are least affected by it in this way also—that the necessity of a fair character for one who aspires to the higher honours of the profession touches not men whose sole idea in entering it is to make as much money as possible. Speak to one of these common-minded fellows of the days when he may, to use a time-honoured phrase, be in the front ranks of the senate and the bar, and he will laugh in your face: “he can make all the money without all that.” Again, it must not be forgotten that after all professional opinion is only the opinion of a small portion of the community. What can its praise or blame matter beside the indifference of the public? Besides, even when taken at its best, the reciprocal influence of the members of the bar upon one another has always this inherent defect, namely, that it is that of men who by force of long companionship have become little inclined to condemn strongly each other's faults. And even such as it is, the influence of professional opinion has scarcely fair play. There are counteracting forces. Those who wish to appreciate accurately the incentives to a high intellectual and moral standard on the part of a barrister should remember how peculiarly the profession is situated in relation to those who distribute its business. “These” (as Talfourd said, in an essay originally published in the *London Magazine*, and entitled “The Profession of the Bar,”) “are not the people at large, not even the factitious assemblage called the public, not scholars, nor readers, nor thinkers, nor admiring audiences, nor sages of the law, but simply attorneys. In this class of men are of course comprised infinite varieties of knowledge and of worth; many men of sound learning and honourable character; many who are tolerably honest and decorously dull; some who are acute and knavish, and more who are knavish without being acute.” “Respectable as is the station of attorneys, they are” (said Talfourd, writing forty years ago, though he would probably speak more favourably of them now) “greatly inferior to the bar in education and endowments. And yet on their opinion, without appeal, the fate of the members of the profession depends.”

Upon the whole, looking at the relations of the members of the bar with one another and with others, one sees no cause to wonder that the influence of its opinion should be insufficient, nor any ground of hope for the future. But, if society at large showed less indifference to the matter, if there were less blind worshipping of success and more of discerning approbation, less condemnation of men in the mass, and more of pointed and discriminating censure, and, together with a more persistent exacting of that which is truly expedient or necessary, less ill-advised requiring of that which is neither necessary nor expedient—then indeed many blemishes might disappear which now mar the administration of justice.

How comes it, in good sooth, that, with so much talk of the universal disregard of lawyers for truth and justice, it should be in practice left to the profession itself to animadvert upon particular instances of such misconduct? It is surely time that the Bar and the Public should know each other better.

In order to understand what a barrister ought to do, and what he ought not, let us see a little what is the *rationale* of the system of advocacy.

Every one will agree that he who is charged to decide any question ought to have present to his mind all the considerations that deserve weight on either side, since, otherwise, his decision may be right, but may equally well be wrong. This condition there are several methods of endeavouring to fulfil. You may either cause the parties interested to lay before the judge or other person invested with judicial functions a bare statement of the question in dispute, leaving it to the latter to make all due inquiries and to decide thereon unassisted by argument; or you may cause the parties to ascertain and bring forward the circumstances which they respectively consider to favour their own view, still leaving it, however, to the judge to form his own conclusions therefrom, unassisted by anything in the nature of argument; or you may cause the parties not only to ascertain and bring forward such circumstances as they respectively consider to favour their own view, but, either in person or by representative, to argue the case fully, in presence of the judge, each for his own side. That the last-mentioned system affords a better guarantee than any of the others that every circumstance which deserves weight on either side shall have its due weight given to it, is clear both in principle and experience; and it is no less clear that it is better, were it only for the sake of the advantage gained in point of perspicuity and conciseness, to have the case argued by men trained to the task rather than by the parties themselves. Nor would it afford the same security to have the case argued by barristers or other ministers of the court *inpartially*. It being thus no man's duty and no man's interest to urge all the arguments on any one side, many on each side would naturally be passed over or urged with slight force, and such of them as were urged would be presented to the court in a loose, irregular manner, instead of the whole strength of one side being brought out in sharp relief against the whole strength of the other.

Such being—very roughly and inadequately described—the *rationale* of the system of advocacy, let us now consider, a little in detail, what are the duties of one who follows that profession : first, as to the causes which he will undertake, and, secondly, as to his manner of conducting them when undertaken.

In the first place, it is a palpable absurdity to say that an advocate ought to undertake only causes of the justice of which he is perfectly assured ; since it is obviously impossible to say of any cause, however fair and equitable it may seem on the party's own showing, that it will not turn out to be unjust when the opposite side is heard. The immediate result of the doctrine would be that he would never undertake any cause at all, and the ultimate result, that justice would cease to be administered, unless at the infinite waste of time and labour implied in the pleading of causes by the parties themselves.

On the other hand, it is a piece of pure sophistry to argue that an advocate cannot justifiably use any discretion as to the party for whom he appears, because if he does so, he usurps an office which does not belong to him, and, moreover, exercises it prematurely upon an untried cause. For if the case be clearly bad on the party's own showing, what must it be on his adversary's ? And on what ground is an advocate to be deprived of all free-will and compelled to put his talents at the service of iniquity ? True it is, that one who has a proper distrust of his own judgment and a due regard for the consequences which would follow did he and his colleagues lightly refuse to undertake causes, will be cautious of denying his assistance, especially to a person accused of crime. But that there are occasions in which he not only may, but ought to refuse his aid, in civil cases at least, is fully recognized by the opinion of the profession. The most courteous and considerate of judges has been led to express from the bench his regret that any gentleman at the bar should have been found to undertake such and such a cause.

But ought a barrister to withhold his services when the legal right sought to be exercised is, or appears to be, morally unjust ? A question which must be answered on broad grounds of public utility, and not on any such assumption as that a barrister acts under compulsion ; since of compulsion, in the strict sense of the term, there is obviously none ; and of compulsion in the sense of liability to disfavour for a breach of professional etiquette, society at large can hardly be expected to take much account. Now, in equity, a barrister refusing to aid in enforcing a strict right would virtually take upon himself to declare that the law should not have effect ; for no suit in the courts of equity can be brought without the signature of counsel in testimony of its propriety. At common law the case is not exactly similar ; but it is manifest that even there a lay person can seldom hope, without professional aid, to prosecute successfully the rights which the law gives him. Is it, then, desirable, as a means of closing the avenues to injustice, that a barrister should (practically) bar the exercise of a strict legal right unless he approves of the conduct

of the suitor in a moral point of view? Ought public opinion to require him to do this? Take the case of an informality in a will. The intention and wishes of the testator are clearly and unequivocally expressed, but there is a technical objection to the validity of the instrument, and the heir-at-law, or nearest of kin, seeks to take advantage of the mistake. Is it desirable that the advocate should refuse his assistance unless the suitor satisfies him that there is a sufficient excuse for taking away the property from those for whom the testator intended it, and giving it to a person for whom it was not intended? The advocate might in so refusing be barring the road to injustice; he might, on the contrary, be barring the road to a fair and equitable claim: for who shall say that the client may not have ample justification in circumstances which he does not choose to confide to a stranger? The true answer seems to be, not only as to the above, but as to all similar cases, that it is the duty of an advocate to attempt to dissuade from a course which is apparently too harsh an insisting on legal rights, but that it is not his duty to carry his opposition farther, and virtually to interdict the exercise. At the same time it is well to remember that without some extrinsic control the law will always work occasional injustice, even though you amend it as much as you will. "A certain harshness, sternness, and disregard of individual cases of hardship, are inseparable from the very existence of law." It must always require to be tempered in its application. So that the only sound general conclusion in which we can rest is, that it is rather the client than his representative that a wise public will put upon his trial when advantage is taken of a harsh rule of law.

But supposing the cause to be undertaken and to be free from questions of the last-mentioned kind, what (we are now to inquire) is to be the advocate's manner of conducting it?

In the first place (supposing the issue to be one of fact), he will, in examining his own witnesses, adhere faithfully to those useful rules which forbid any suggestion of the answer desired; avoiding that disreputable trick of asking a question in an irregular form which suggests the reply, and, on its being objected to, withdrawing it and asking it in another shape, by which means "the suggestion is made, the mischief done, and the other side deprived of his remedy." "The degree of good faith with which barristers conform to the rules of evidence, whether or not they are for the moment advantageous to their cause, is (as Mr. Fitzjames Stephen observes, in his interesting work, *A General View of the Criminal Law of England*, p. 282) the best test of their honesty." And in the cross-examination of his opponent's witnesses, distinguishing between means which are really of a nature to elicit truth, and such as are really of a nature to perplex or stifle it, he will sedulously avoid adopting the bullying, browbeating tone so much in vogue in certain of our courts. It is undoubtedly the duty of a cross-examining counsel to expose perjury when perjury has been committed. But to act towards an ordinary adverse witness on the assumption that he is perjured, is utterly unwarranted.

In most cases it inflicts, either needless, or worse than needless pain, at best leaving the evidence unshaken, and the witness's feelings lacerated; oftener driving him to such a state, that he can neither recollect the truth nor utter it intelligibly. It is most desirable that fit instances of this should be selected for earnest, vigorous protest. There are actually men who have gone to the bar for no other reason than that they felt within themselves the capacity to become adepts in this noble art. That which a cross-examining counsel ought to do, and that which an honourable cross-examining counsel does, is to use such means as will detect and expose any conscious or unconscious inaccuracy into which the witness may have fallen, whilst leaving his faculties clear to explain himself. For this purpose such skill as Scarlett's—that great master of the art of cross-examination—who would gossip with a witness, till he so diverted the current of his thoughts, that the truth would come forth completely free from bias, and from the disturbing effect of all foregone conclusions; such skill, I say, is most useful and laudable, and should not be disparaged by calling it “astuteness;” and it is to arts like these that the generality of barristers resort. To suppose that the practice of bullying and browbeating is at all common, except in a very small and disreputable class of the profession, is not only a mistake, but a most unhappy mistake. It has a most prejudicial effect, in attaching to the name of barrister a lower estimation than either the theory of the office, or the general conduct of those who fill it, deserves, and so rendering less marked than should be the distance which in public esteem separates those who worthily follow from those who ignobly pervert a noble profession. The existence of the misconception may be traced to the fact (referred to by a former writer in the *Cornhill*), that of those people who form their judgment of barristers from original sources of information, and not from novels and the like, the greater part derive their ideas from the cases which are reported at length in the newspapers, which are not the really common, or the really important cases—mercantile causes of all kinds, *bond fide* questions about dispositions of property and the like, “possessing no interest for the general public;” but rather “matters of a slightly scandalous kind—actions for libel, assault, seduction, or breach of promise of marriage—actions by fraudulent bill-discounters—horse-causes, in which whole days are spent in complicated perjury—and, in fact, every suit which could be classed under the general title of *Fool v. Knave*.”

There is one part of a cross-examining counsel's duties which may usefully be made the subject of further remark, and on which, fortunately, it is open to us to borrow from Mr. Stephen's work already referred to. I mean the cross-examination of witnesses to their credit. “The case,” as Mr. Stephen says, “is one of conflicting interests. The interest of the public” (he is speaking of criminal cases only, but the public is also interested in the equitable decision of civil cases) “is that justice should have all the materials which are requisite to the formation of a sound judgment. The interest of the witnesses is that their character and

the history of their past lives should be respected. Questions relating to the credit of witnesses are frequently most material, and this may be the case, not only when the matters are relevant, but when they are irrelevant to the matter at issue." In these cases (according to Mr. Stephen) they ought to be asked. "On the other hand, they may be needless and cruel to the last degree. Suppose a case rested principally on the oath of a single person, who was obliged to admit that he had made similar charges on former occasions, that the persons so charged had been acquitted, that he had himself been tried and punished for extorting money by threats of accusation, would not all this be decisive of the case at issue? Yet not a word of it would be relevant to that particular charge. On the other hand, if a woman prosecuted a man for picking her pocket, it would be monstrous to inquire whether she had not had an illegitimate child ten years before, though circumstances might exist which might render such an inquiry necessary. For instance, she might owe a grudge to the person against whom the charge was brought on account of circumstances connected with such a transaction, and have invented the charge for that reason. It is practically impossible to lay down a positive rule distinguishing cases like the first from cases like the second of those instances . . . A wide discretion" is necessarily left "in the hands both of the bar and of the bench." Taking into consideration civil as well as criminal cases, we shall probably come to this conclusion, amongst others, viz. that it is not the mere materiality or immateriality of the question which will be decisive of its propriety; but that this also must be considered—whether, even if it be in one sense worth while to put it, it is on the whole worth while to put it, regard being had to the degree in which it affects the value of the evidence, to the pain which it is likely to inflict upon the witness, and to the magnitude of the interest at stake between the parties, be they crown and prisoner, or ordinary civil litigants. It is well (for more than one reason) to observe that although a barrister who is a man of honour, and wishes honestly to discharge his duty, may often be obliged, by his instructions, to ask most painful questions, yet he may greatly alleviate the pain which he inflicts, by withdrawing the apparent imputation if the answer given is a plain denial, and by apologising for the pain which he has caused. Most people will throughout agree with Mr. Stephen when he says, "An advocate is bound in honour (it appears to me) to take this course when a witness positively denies the imputation suggested by the question, unless he has strong grounds to disbelieve the denial;" and that "so far from injuring a witness's character, a question asked, answered, and apologized for in this manner may put an end to slanderous rumours, which had never before shown themselves openly;" and that "if an apology was not tendered freely, the judge might declare that in his opinion it ought to be made, which would go far to produce the same effect."

But it is time to proceed to consider what are the advocate's duties in arguing the question, whether it be one of law or of fact. And here it must be borne in mind that the advocate is not the judge. His office is

(as already stated, and for the reasons already stated) not to array conflicting probabilities and decide between them, but to urge as forcibly as he can the arguments on *one* side of the question. But in doing this it is not his duty to resort to sophistry or false logic. We are all of us, of course, every day, continually using, consciously or unconsciously, sophistical arguments on one subject or another; and all that can reasonably be required of the advocate is that he shall not knowingly do so; but so much may reasonably be required. And it is in vain to urge in excuse that the advocate is but the mouthpiece of his client, and therefore irresponsible for the language or the arguments which he advances. "He is a representative, but not a delegate. He gives to his client the benefit of his learning, his talents, and his judgment; but all through he never forgets (or should never forget) what he owes to himself and to others. If he be the advocate of an individual, and *retained* and remunerated (often inadequately) for his valuable services, yet he has a prior and perpetual *retainer* on behalf of truth and justice; and there is no crown or other licence which in any cause, or for any party, can discharge him from that primary and paramount retainer."* And whenever he asserts aught of his own opinion or belief, he is of course bound to assert only that which he conscientiously believes. To engage an advocate is not to suborn a false witness. But probably, as a general rule, the less an advocate gives of his own opinions or beliefs, the better. Some men are from temperament more inclined than others to sympathize with and believe that truth and justice are on the side of the cause committed to them; so that to introduce the opinions of the respective litigants' counsel must tend to make the success or failure of either party's cause in some measure dependent upon an uncertain and accidental condition. Actual lying, wilful misrepresentations, we may pass by without comment.

There is one thing in argument (or more properly in persuasion) which an advocate is surely bound in honour to avoid, but which, nevertheless, men of the fairest reputation in their profession sometimes allow themselves to be guilty of—that is, influencing the jury by considerations utterly foreign to the case. For instance, if the credit of a witness be impeached on the ground of his having been previously convicted of some heinous crime, surely it is hardly honourable to try and get the jury to believe him out of compassion! Yet men of good standing will attempt this. If the question were indeed one of generosity or harshness towards a fallen man, then, no doubt, it would be right and praiseworthy to talk feelingly of the duty of charity, but when the fate of the witness is in no way dependent on the issue, but the question is one for impartial decision between the parties, such eloquence is then the purest clap-net. And it is no excuse for such devices to say that it is open to the other side to set the balance right by resorting to the like trickery (for no

* Justice Crompton, in "*The Queen v. O'Connell*."—7 *Irish Law Reports*, pp. 312-13.

other word can be used), or to undo the ill effect produced by showing how unfair are such appeals to the passions; for if the effect is to be undone, why produce it? And if the other side are to resort to the like devices, what security can there remain for a true and just decision? The one simple test for all ordinary questions of right and wrong in advocacy is this: "Will the cause of truth be advantaged, supposing both parties resort to the like means?"

So long (it is well to observe) as an advocate conforms to this test by obeying faithfully the above and similar rules of argument to which it gives rise, it is not only most absurd, but it is most unwise on the part of a disinterested public to blame him for advancing, to the best of his ability, the arguments on *one* side only of the question. I do not say "unfair" so to blame him: for barristers are men of the world, and we know that, "when men are men of the world, hard words" (*if undeserved*) "run off them like water off a duck's back:" but I do say "most unwise," since every word of disparagement of that which does not merit it, takes from the weight of condemnation lying on that which really deserves reprehension. Let the public, then, reserve such epithets as "venal eloquence" for an employment of talents to which they justly apply.

A difficulty will, no doubt, be started here. "Granting," it will be said, "that he is in every sense a faultless advocate, who, his like pleading on the other side, pleads in such a way that the right side (humanly speaking) cannot fail to triumph; granting, further, that if two advocates were opposed to each other, each pursuing with equal ability the course above indicated, the truth would triumph with greater certainty in this way than by any other; yet an advocate is not justified in pleading in this partial manner when his opponent is inferior to him in ability." Not a very practical difficulty this. For, in the first place, the smaller matters get the smaller men, the greater matters the men of largest experience and ability. And a difference in ability may seem to exist where there is really none: want of brilliancy is often compensated by the possession of faculties less conspicuous but more effective. Scarlett was at least as great an advocate as Brougham. And if there should be, on the whole, a real difference in the ability with which the respective causes are conducted—if the one is done justice to and the other not—the client has probably his own carelessness to blame for not choosing a more proper representative. It rarely happens that a client is so poor as to be unable to secure in the usual way the services of an able advocate; and when the case does occur, the bar of England is not so devoid of men of spirit and honour that he need fear to want assistance, if his cause be just. But though, for these and other reasons, an advocate can rarely be required by any principle to relax his efforts, or to do part of the work which properly falls on the other side, yet it can never be lawful for him to take advantage of the inexperience of an opponent by resorting to means of forwarding his cause which he would never think of resorting to if opposed

by an equal in ability. Great advocates have done this, but surely it is eminently un-English and unfair.

It must, however, be confessed that although these one-sided contentions are sound in principle, and work well in practice where the end in view is to arrive at impartial truth, yet they are scarcely fitted, without modification (and even though each advocate conformed strictly to the theory of his office), for inquiries where to arrive at absolute truth is of less importance than *not* to err in a certain direction: and this is the reason why in criminal cases—where, obviously, it is of greater moment *not* to convict the prisoner if innocent than to ensure his conviction if guilty—the counsel for the crown is required not only to abstain from all false argument and from other like courses from which no good can ever come, and which the counsel in civil cases also are bound to avoid, but to abate somewhat of his exertions in urging sound arguments, and to point out to a considerable extent the arguments on the other side. The prisoner's counsel, on the other hand, is allowed, in the same spirit of moderation towards the accused, rather a wider licence than is conceded to counsel in civil cases: subject to some qualifications, he is expected to take, on behalf of his client, every advantage which the facts or the law afford. But though, speaking broadly, the counsel for an accused person is considered justified in taking, on behalf of his client, every advantage which the facts or the law afford, he is not held justified by the opinion of the bar, any more than by that of the public, in directing suspicion upon an innocent person when he knows of his client's guilt—as appeared with sufficient clearness in a notable case that occurred some years ago.

The whole subject of the moral code of the Bar is a most interesting one. Yet more important is the spirit by which its members are animated. True and weighty are those old words of Hooker;* “If they which employ their labour and travail about the public administration of justice follow it only as a trade, with unquenchable and unconscionable thirst for gain, being not in heart persuaded that justice is God's own work, and themselves his agents in the business, the sentence of right, God's own verdict, and themselves his priests to deliver it, formalities of justice do but smother right, and that which was necessarily ordained for the common good is, through shameful abuse, made the cause of common misery.”

* *Ecc. Pol.* bk. v.

E r a s m u s.

ONE of the most singular literary revolutions is that which has befallen the great modern writers who, in acquiring their fame, used as an instrument the Latin language. We are not thinking now of men who, like Bacon, Spinoza, and scores of others, have employed Latin as a natural medium for communicating with the learned on philosophical subjects ; nor of those who, like Gray or Addison, have occasionally produced pieces in professed imitation of the classical writers. We are thinking of that earlier race, to whom, whatever the language of their mothers or nurses, Latin was practically the language of their lives ; who wrote in it whatever they wrote, histories, commentaries, epigrams, or private letters ; who formed from it, and the Greek, the very names by which they were known throughout Europe ; and who lived and corresponded familiarly with Danes, Poles, Portuguese, Italians, English, on the common basis of the use of a classical tongue, and the study of the classical literature. That these men performed an immense service to our modern civilization no competent judge will deny. But while enjoying the honey, the world has forgotten the bees. Age by age, as the modern languages have developed themselves, and the modern literatures have absorbed the riches of the past, oblivion has slowly gathered over the founders and pioneers of the new era. Like the knight mentioned by Froissart, who fell overboard from a galley, and was instantly sunk by his armour, *their* classical panoply has dragged them down. So it has been with Politian, with Mariana, with Buchanan, with Muretus ; and so with ERASMUS, who had a prouder name and a greater popularity than them all. What we propose to do on this occasion, is simply to tell the general reader, to whom Erasmus is a name only, what manner of man he was and what kind of life he led ; what was his influence on the modern world, and what his claims on the gratitude of mankind.

By race Erasmus was one of the great Teutonic stock, and always held it the chief success of his life that he had raised the condition of literature on the northern side of the Alps, and enabled "Germans" to dispute with Italians that supremacy in scholarship which more recent ages have conceded to them in music. But if he was "a German," as he sometimes calls himself, in this sense, he was more strictly a Dutchman or Netherlander, and was born a subject of the Dukes of Burgundy, to whom Holland had passed by an heiress in an earlier part of the fifteenth century. The circumstances of his birth were romantic ; and the life of his father, Gerard, has been made in our own age the subject of a romance. Gerard belonged to a respectable middle-class family at Gouda, about twelve

miles from Rotterdam, on the way to Utrecht,—a decayed old town with a great grass-grown square, still visited by the tourist for the sake of some painted glass in its principal church. He was a man of good education as the times went, and had much of the wit and liveliness which afterwards distinguished his son—too much of it for a certain Margaret, daughter of a physician at Sevenbergen in Brabant, who became a mother by him without waiting till she had become his wife. But the case was not an ordinary one. She was of his own class. He had solemnly affianced himself to her, and he would have married her but for a base stratagem of which they were the victims. His relations, unwilling that he should fulfil his promises, wrote to him at Rome, where he was pushing his fortune, that Margaret was dead. In a fit of despair, and perhaps of remorse, he took religious vows, and raised up an impassable barrier between them. On his return to Holland and discovery of the cheat, he and Margaret, without living as husband and wife, still did their duty by their offspring. They lived till Gerard Gerardi, or Desiderius Erasmus (as he called himself by a kind of classical pun on his Dutch names), was about fourteen years old, and left him some means, which his guardians administered with base dishonesty. Few great men have had such a constant struggle with adverse fortune—beginning, one may say, at the cradle—as this great Restorer of Letters, Conservative Reformer, and First Scholar of a memorable age.

He was born at Rotterdam, either in 1465 or 1467—we ourselves incline to accept the former date,—and the prosperous sea-port still cherishes in its market-place the brazen seventeenth-century statue of him, which looks so quaint in its cap and gown among fruit-stalls and cabbage-stalls and barges gliding along green canals. A delicate and quiet boy with yellow hair and blue eyes, he must have been a pretty sight on his way to school at Gouda—as a chorister in the cathedral of Utrecht—as a youthful student at Deventer. He loved his studies early, barbarous as were the books then in use; and his weak health tended to keep him attached to them, and withdrawn from the noise and convivialities of a jolly, but rough and uncultivated people. Nature had made him a man of letters; circumstances compelled him to become, sorely against his will—first a monk, and then a priest. The author of *Tristram Shandy* was not more unlike Mr. Stiggins, the author of *Peter Plymley's Letters* was not more unlike Mr. Chadband, than Erasmus was unlike the average friar, monk, or priest of that day. His constitution was peculiarly unfitted for the monastic life, either in its grave or gay aspects, to begin with. He required to eat frequently in small quantities, and could not bear an alternation of fasting with feasting. He had a particular disrelish for fish. He only slept well in the early part of the night, and if he was once disturbed could not compose himself again for hours. His natural piety was strong, or certainly not deficient, but ceremonies bored and wearied him; while the heavy feeds and “prolix compotations,” as he calls them, with which the inhabitants of monasteries

refreshed themselves after the routine of their life, were equally little to his taste. What he mainly liked was study, and a quiet chat (well out of draughts) over a sober cup of burgundy with men of wit and scholarship. However, what with the bullying of his guardians and of the monks of Stein near Gouda, where he went on probation, and spent his time in study, he was induced to enter the order of Augustinian Canons. He was afterwards ordained priest by the Bishop of Utrecht. Through life, he continued to attack in all his books the custom of coercing young people into religious houses. He ceased to wear the habit of his own order, after some years; and when he became distinguished, he always preferred a salary from any potentate to church preferment of the same value. In short, he was a kind of ecclesiastic *unattached*; and without repudiating his cloth, preferred the life and reputation of a scholar. But this good came from his ecclesiastical training and position,—that he spoke with authority when lashing ecclesiastical abuses, and that he was led to apply his talents for learning to a new and sensible theology—bearing such fruits as his famous edition of the Greek New Testament—and the influence of which has been felt in Europe ever since.

At Stein Erasmus remained for some time, hating the place, and consoling himself with literature. He knew his Terence and Horace by heart very early; and early acquired the mastery of a Latinity quite unlike the imitative classical purism of the southern scholars, but free, vigorous, and graphic. He got away from Stein at last, under the protection of a Bishop of Cambray, who, having an eye on a cardinal's hat, wanted a good Latinist to take to Rome with him as secretary. But the scheme came to nothing, and the bishop advised Erasmus to go to Paris and study at the University, promising him a stipend, which was badly paid or not paid at all. This was his first experience of patronage—one of the man of learning's most constant but often most dismal and uncertain resources at that time. He lived in Montagu College at Paris, faring miserably, eating musty eggs, drinking bad water, and sleeping in a vile atmosphere. Here he seems to have made the acquaintance of his earliest English patron and friend, William Blount fourth Lord Montjoy, who settled a pension of a hundred crowns on him, and who suggested to him his first visit to this country in 1498. The previous year he had been in the Low Countries, at the castle of another great friend, Ann, Marchioness of Vere or Weer. England gave him at once a whole little band of friends: Thomas More, Colet dean of St. Paul's, Grobyn, one of the first men who introduced Greek at Oxford, Linacre, and so on. He lived a good deal at Oxford during this visit, and studied hard at Greek, of which he knew very little before he was thirty, and which he learned entirely by his own industry. The wanderings he went through all this time are wonderful to contemplate. We find him at Oxford, London, Paris, Orleans, Tournay, driven from one place by plague, from another by poverty, journeying always on miserable *Rosinantes*, which

broke down with him in the winter's mud sometimes; and in perpetual fear of being robbed, though often hardly worth robbing. Once, he tells a correspondent how, when his screw broke down with him, he made a vow to St. Paul that if he helped him out of this scrape, he would write a commentary on his Epistle to the Romans. Another time, he hired a horse at Amiens, to go to Paris in company with an Englishman, and soon found that the man from whom he had hired, and who went with them, meant to rob them on the first opportunity. The poor scholar had to watch every movement of the rascal, and lay awake in the double-bedded room where they passed the night, till near daylight, when he roused up the house, and, descending, found the rascal's horse ready saddled to have carried him off if his plan had succeeded. This was one of the ordinary adventures of that rough time. When Erasmus quitted England at the close of the 1498 visit, the Custom House at Dover seized twenty pounds he had with him—the exportation of coined money having been forbidden by Henry VII. He speaks of this disaster as “a shipwreck;” and to a poor fellow in his position, who, when he got a little money, bought first Greek books and then clothes, a shipwreck it was. On such occasions, there was nothing for it but downright sturdy begging from his patrons and friends. There is a letter of his from Orleans in 1500 to one Jacobus Battus, a faithful brother-scholar, and henchman, in which he fairly cudgels him into pressing the Lady Weer for pecuniary help. “You must excuse my modesty to her,” says he, “in amiable words, since my disposition won't suffer me to open my neediness to her myself. You must tell her that I am in the greatest poverty from the expense of this Orleans flight. . . . Italy is the fittest place for a man to take the title of doctor; and Italy cannot be visited by a delicate man without a good sum of money, especially if his literary reputation makes it impossible for him to live in a shabby style. Show her how much more honour I am likely to bring by my literature to her, than those other theologians whom she feeds. For they preach mere commonplaces, I write what will live for ever. They, trifling in an illiterate way, are heard in a church, here and there; my books will be read by Latins, by Greeks, by every nation in the whole world. There are plenty of unlearned theologians everywhere, but the like of me is only found in the course of many ages—unless ” (he breaks off) “you object to lying a little bit in the cause of a friend!” Through all this comic braggadocio—the evidence of an inherent cheerfulness which misery might damp but never crushed—we see a proud self-confidence and courage which was part of the man's greatness. He was now not only studying Greek, and preparing for his edition of St. Jerome, but he was bringing out the earliest impression of his *Adagia*—that famous collection of proverbs, which first fully revealed to Europe the superiority of his learning and genius. The form of this book (which occupies a folio to itself in the great Leyden edition of his *Opera Omnia*) is such as to give the freest play to his talent and reading. He takes up any proverb—*Quot homines, tot sententia,*

Quid cani et balneo?—or whatever else it may be; explains its meaning and significance with ample illustration from the whole classical literature, and then, if in the humour, makes it the text for some pleasant little disquisition on the applications which may be made of it to his own time. Accordingly, much of his most important teaching occurs in the *Adagia*. On *Dulce bellum inexpertis*, for instance, he has as pretty a little plea against war, both from the Christian and common-sense points of view, as ever was made by a public writer. All the satire and all the reasoning of modern times is anticipated in it. For Erasmus was, above all, the man who did most to supersede the old feudal way of looking at things, whether as matters of argument or sentiment, and to substitute for it the peculiar modern spirit,—utilitarian, practical, tolerant, and business-like. He is the bridge which connects the classical mind—christianized in the process—with the mind of the nineteenth century; and is thus, at once, a Christian Horace, and a Thackeray or Sydney Smith of Henry VIII.'s time, with profound erudition into the bargain. Apart, however, from its sense and satire, its ridicule of tyrants, fanatics, and fools, the *Adagia* has an historical value. Erasmus has scattered up and down it curious little personal reminiscences, and biographical sketches of his contemporaries; notices of Rodolphus Agricola, of Wolsey, of James IV. of Scotland (to whose natural son he was tutor when in Italy), of the Aldi, the famous printers of Venice, of the Frobens, the famous printers of Basle. There is a little sketch of the Dutch character under *Aur's Batava*, which has an historical value, and is one of many passages throwing light on the condition of Europe at the opening of the sixteenth century. Erasmus sometimes quizzed his Dutch countrymen, but had a sincere respect for their good nature and good sense. All his objections to them, indeed, resolved themselves into these—that they liked learning too little, and that they liked liquor too much.

The *Adagia* appeared in its earliest shape (for it was much enlarged in subsequent editions), at Paris, in 1500, and was dedicated to our countryman Lord Montjoy. Next year Erasmus issued his treatise, the *Militis Christiani Enchiridion*, a manual of Christian piety from his favourite point of view, as something practical, humane, charitable, and moderate. Loyola complained that this book chilled his devotion, and there are religious people detesting Loyola and all his sons, to whom its want of "unction" would probably be equally distasteful. But Erasmus hated all extremes, and wrote to men of sense and literature. So we find him serving the cause of reformation before the Reformation had begun, in his own honest, lively fashion, and preaching the spirit of the Gospel with a cheerful flowing wit. "Many people," he says, "count how many services they are at every day; and as if this was the chief thing, and as if they owed nothing further to Christ, they walk out of the church, and resume their former morals. . . . You are sprinkled with holy water, but what's the good of that, if you don't wash away the inner dirt from your soul? You worship the saints, and like to touch

their relics, but you despise the best things they have left behind them—the examples of their pure lives. No worship is more grateful to Mary than imitating her humility. . . . You think it a great thing to be buried in the cowl of Francis, but a dress like his will do you no good when you are dead, if your morals have been different from his when living." . . . And so he goes on, with many an antithesis which seems easy to us *now*, but the need of which *then* was about to plunge Europe into the greatest of modern revolutions. What Erasmus contributed to the Reformation was *light* rather than *heat*, but the one was as much wanted as the other. It was an intellectual as well as a spiritual movement, and he was its chief intellect. Already the bigots had begun to suspect literature, and to preach up ignorance as a part of religion. But the answer of Erasmus was constant—that literature would prove to be religion's best friend—and *this* was the fight of his life. The *Enchiridion* was only one of many religious treatises of his, which were translated into every language of Europe.

He made a second visit to England in 1505–6, when he was introduced to Warham, who held the archbishopric of Canterbury from 1503 to 1532, one of his firmest friends. And now he realized an early ambition, a long-cherished dream: he went to Italy, and took his doctor's degree. Italian scholars ranked then as Italian singers do now; and though Erasmus and others on our side of the Alps were beginning to grudge this superiority, the advantages of a degree from the morning-land of learning were undeniable. Thirty years later, when a young Scotch scholar, Florence Wilson, waited on Cardinal Sadolet, the cardinal was as much astonished by his flowing and elegant Latin as if he had been harangued by his mule. It was Erasmus who first made it absurd for the men of Southern Europe to call the men of the North barbarians; though the custom seems to have lasted for some time after its absurdity was proved. He took his degree at Turin, and fixed his first residence at Bologna. A curious accident that befel him here determined him to get rid of his monastic garb. The physicians who attended plague cases were compelled to wear a white cloth from the shoulder, that people might shun them in the streets, and the dress of Erasmus was so like that of a plague physician, that some young men whom he approached too near abused and nearly stoned him. He obtained a dispensation from the use of his religious habit from Pope Julius II., which was confirmed afterwards by Leo X.; and henceforth he dressed like one of the secular clergy in the grave and sober, but not grotesque attire so familiar to us on the canvas of Holbein and Durer. He lived for some time at Venice, where Aldus Manutius brought out for him a second edition of the *Adagia*, and introduced him to the eminent scholars and friends of scholars of the city. He resided also at Padua and Sienna, and was at Rome in March, 1508. The cardinals were kind, and liberal offers were made to induce him to fix his permanent residence in Italy. But though always glad of help, he had a dread of anything like permanent dependence and restraint. Besides,

about 1509, when Henry VIII. came to the throne, his English friends were anxious that he should once more try his luck here. He crossed the Rhetian Alps, came north by the Rhine, looked in upon his friends in the Low Countries, and reached London—going first to Blackfriars Monastery, and then to the house of Sir Thomas More, at Chelsea. He had beguiled the long journey—much of it, as usual, performed on horse-back—by meditating his famous satire, the *Encomium Morie*, or *Praise of Folly*, which he wrote in a few days after his arrival. Folly, in this ironical piece, makes a long speech to prove her importance in the system of life, by showing how great her power is, and how insipid the world would be without the seasoning which she supplies. "Don't you see," she says, "that those who apply themselves to the study of philosophy, or to arduous business, get old in their very youth; whereas the fool is fat, neat, and comfortable, and will never feel any inconvenience of old age, unless the contagion of some wise man should spoil him?" How much, she argues, is added to human enjoyment by conceit, thoughtlessness, and the scores of other forms of folly! And she goes on to enumerate many a specimen of it,—national bragging, and pride, like that of the Italians in their superior civilization, of the French in their fine manners, of the Scotch in ancient birth and dialectics; pompous funerals; the excesses of monkery; the crassness of the prevailing superstitions. Of course, these last-mentioned evils are ridiculed with a peculiar gusto and liveliness. Folly admits that it would be perhaps best to pass over the theologians in silence, "as a race of men wonderfully supercilious and irritable," and who would probably attack her with six hundred propositions, and force her to retreat under pain of being declared "*a heretic*,"—"for with that thunderbolt," adds she, "they are in the habit of terrifying those whom they do not like." But she cannot resist a playful exposure of their intolerable pedantries and prolixities, their discussions on abstruse points, such as "what would Peter have consecrated if he had consecrated at the time that Christ was on the cross?"—their "notions," "relations," "formalities," "quiddities,"—and scholastic questions which the apostles themselves could hardly have understood without a fresh inspiration. The apostles, Folly goes on, making herself the mouthpiece of Erasmus's wisdom, baptized; but they never taught anywhere what was the "formal, material, efficient and final cause" of baptism. They adored, but in the spirit—and not a little conventional image of Christ drawn on a wall. They exhort to good works, but they do not distinguish between the *opus operans* and the *opus operatum*. It would be a good thing if all the Scotists and Occamists and Albertists were sent to fight against the Turks and Saracens instead of waging a useless war amongst themselves. And so the literary reformer's war in the cause of a rational evangelical Christianity goes on. Satire was never applied to higher purposes, or with more important results. It is of a pleasant kind, too, the satire of Erasmus—a wholesome vinegar from a good grape. There is nothing ferocious about it, for he was essentially genial and humane; and hence

there was less inconsistency in his refusing to act with the thorough-going assailants of abuses than there would have been if he had been a harsher and severer type of man. His aim was to reform the Church *from within*, and to reform it from the point of view of a humanist or lover of letters, rather than from that of a preacher.

At this time Erasmus remained in England for three or four years pretty continuously, and professed Divinity and Greek at Cambridge. We find him grumbling at the Cambridge beer, and asking his correspondent to send him some wine, which must on no account be sweet, the gout being now looming in the future we suppose. There was frequently plague flying about; living was expensive, and there was little money to be made by his lectures. Archbishop Warham was still kind; his friendship with More, Colet, and others of our nation remained unbroken; and he laboured at his *Greek Testament* and *Jerome*, under circumstances about as favourable as he had anywhere hitherto found them. Still England did not seem likely to furnish him a permanent provision, though he had a pension which he had taken instead of a benefice from the Primate; and the prices of everything were rising in the prospect of war. The scholar therefore prepared to move his tent, and in the summer of 1514 went off to the Low Countries, which had now come under the dominion of the House of Hapsburg. The first edition of his *Greek Testament* was soon making its way with the applause of the learned and liberal, but to the great disgust of many a bigot. Leo the Tenth, however, in two Papal briefs, approved Erasmus's labours, and this high sanction was of great service to him in the stormy times which followed. For the Reformation was now beginning to pass from the region of intellect into the region of action; from thought into deed; from literature into politics. The curtain had risen for the Lutheran tragedy, as it was the fashion to call it; and Erasmus, who had looked forward to an easy and lettered old age, soon began to find that his last years were to be as troubled as his early ones. Charles the Fifth made him a councillor, and endowed him with a salary. As far as fame is concerned, he had his heart's content of it. His editions of fathers and classics, his occasional treatises, his delightful *Colloquia* and admirable *Ciceronianus*, were received with the applause and wonder of Europe. He was called the "Cicero of Germany," the "Champion of Good Letters," and by a score of other fine names. Invitations to different countries poured in on him, and so strong was the bond of unity created by a common language and literature in Europe, that a man like Erasmus might feel himself as much at home in Rome as in London, in Friburg as in Leuven. But now began a new series of vexations. In the great struggle which had commenced, both parties claimed him for their own; the Lutherans as an enemy of abuses, the orthodox as a member of the church. Erasmus, however, had in his heart of hearts complete sympathy with neither, though he had some sympathy with both. He wished to improve the church, but to improve it on the existing basis, and all tumult and schism was utterly hateful to his nature. He was a

moderate man, a bookish man, a humourist. And while we readily admit that his was not the kind of stuff of which heroes and martyrs are made, let us be careful to insist that it was right good and useful stuff notwithstanding. He was not secretly a Lutheran pretending to be orthodox, any more than he was secretly a bigot, pretending to be a reformer. He honestly told both parties from the beginning that he held a view of his own, independent of them, and that he should continue to serve the cause of Christianity and good letters (it was one and the same cause in *his eyes*) in his own way. For instance, we have him writing to Wolsey, from Antwerp, in May, 1518, that his great aim has been to restore literature; that literature is not responsible for everything that Luther and his followers may do; that he knows little of Luther's writings, though he hears nothing but good of his life; that the violence of the Lutherans may injure literature by provoking a reaction; and that his advice to Eobanus Hessus, and Ulric Hutten, and Beatus, and the rest of them, always was, to be temperate and reasonable, and not to overload their cause with unnecessary materials of discord. But Erasmus did not hold one language to Wolsey, and another language to Luther. When Luther wrote to him from Wittenberg, in March, 1519, his answer was in the same familiar key. "The people here," he says, "persist in calling me the standard-bearer of your party; and they look upon your books as giving them a handle for oppressing sound literature in the interests of the majesty of theology, which they value much more highly than they do Christ. I have told them that you are quite unknown to me, and that I have not even read your books." And then follows what was the cream of his counsel to Luther and his friends always. "As for myself, I reserve myself entire, that I may do the more good to the sound letters reviving amongst us. And it seems to me that more good may be done by civil modesty than by violence. So Christ brought the world under his dominion. So Paul abrogated the Judaic law. It is better worth while to call out against those who abuse the authority of the pontiffs, than against the pontiffs themselves. Schools are not so much to be treated with contempt, as recalled to more sober studies. In regard to things too deeply implanted to be torn out, they ought to be dealt with by strong arguments rather than asseverations." All this was at least consistent and above-board. If it was "trimming," it was the honest trimming of a man who did not wish to capsize the common Christian boat. An Erasmian Reformation, purging the Church gradually without breaking its unity—instead of the actual Reformation, with its divisions, wars, and lasting damage to the unity of Germany in particular—may have been impossible. Many are probably glad that things took the course they did, instead. But, at least, it was an honest dream as far as Erasmus was concerned; and if the condition of ecclesiastical Europe, Papal or Protestant, is everywhere purer now, he must be credited with a noble share in the work. With regard to the question of vulgar temporal interests, there were no considerations of that sort which could

tempt Erasmus to one side more than the other. He was sure of a European audience, whether he wrote from Wittenberg or from Louvain. There were Protestant princes in Germany as ready to give him the little he needed as Charles V. himself; and he might have died in his bed as quietly as Luther or Melancthon.

The head-quarters of Erasmus during the earlier years of the Reformation—from 1514, indeed, to 1522—were at Louvain—an ancient seat of the civilization of the Netherlands, much affected by theologians. He might move about, indeed, when he wanted a little recreation, among other old cities of the Netherlands, Mechlin, or Brussels, or Antwerp;—cities, in the antique parts of which, with their lofty gables, and spires, and rich ornamentation, faded but beautiful, it is so easy still to fancy one's meeting the grave, worn face, lightened by airiest humour, of the dark-robed scholar. But Louvain was his head-quarters, and he led the old life there—working like a day-labourer at fathers and classics; moistening his simple meals with a little Burgundy, chiefly of the Beune kind; grumbling at bigots, and potentates not sufficiently awake to the claims of literature; and maintaining a voluminous correspondence with all parts of Europe. We find him in 1519 thanking a good abbot who had sent him a haunch of venison and a copy of Cyprian. But there were theologians of a different stamp—men stingy with their venison and ignorant of Cyprian—who treated him in quite another way. While the Lutherans were grumbling that Erasmus only thought of himself, the bigots were furious with him as the cause of all the Lutheran mischief. He was abused in the pulpits of Louvain itself by preachers and professors, who, as he playfully observes, had nothing of the theologian about them but the purple cap. "One had better cultivate a garden than literature!" he exclaims, once, in a despondent mood. The ignorance of these children of darkness was prodigious. Many of them held, not in the Netherlands only, but in England and everywhere else, that there was something impious in editing the New Testament or Jerome at all. They thought that by reverting to early MSS., Erasmus was departing from the sacred text, instead of going nearer to what the sacred text actually was when delivered. A new reading was a blasphemy in their eyes. And they often declaimed against him, without reading what he had written or even being able to read it. One worthy thought that St. Paul had written to the Corinthians in Hebrew. Another translated a passage in which we are told to "shun" heretics, as a command to "kill" them. All this sort of men laid the blame of Lutheranism on the revival of the ancient literature; and made the most pious resolutions (which they faithfully kept) to have nothing to do with Greek! The attitude of such men towards Erasmus was one of base hate and envy; and these passions displayed themselves in the wildest ways. Burly Dominicans and greasy Carmelites were heard raging against him in waggons and canal-boats, to mobs and markets. "Erasmus laid the egg," was one of their sayings, "and Luther hatched it." "It is from Erasmus that Luther has sucked

his venom." The storm-tossed Ulysses of letters, as he called himself, began to grow tired of Louvain. In 1518 he had paid his farewell visit to England, and had been received with courtesy by Henry VIII. and Wolsey. He resolved, about 1522, to settle at Baale, where he had several times been on business, and where the printing-house of his friend and printer, Froben, was beginning to acquire a celebrity like that of the Aldi at Venice. To Froben's son he dedicated his *Colloquia*, the publication of which belongs to this period. No other work of his now finds a numerous body of readers; but the *Colloquia* have become classical, and are issued, in company with Horace and Lucian, from the presses of Tauchnitz. They may be old-fashioned, but they are not obsolete. Admirable as dialogues by their life-like vivacity and wit, they are even more attractive as pictures of the time. The priest, the monk, the scholar, the pilgrim of the opening of the sixteenth century, are brought before us; and we see the old mediæval and Catholic society of Europe in the last shapes which it assumed before passing away for ever. The satire of these colloquies was another source of offence, not to the bigots only, but to all the strait-laced among the orthodox. The Reformation was now, they thought, passing beyond the stage of jokes. Luther had defied the Pope, and burnt his bull; and it was time for everybody who respected the Holy See to abstain from ridiculing the abuses which were made the pretexts for such deeds. But Erasmus would not accept this point of view. He was a good Catholic, and he did not mean to break from the Pope. But that was no reason why he should shut his mouth about scandals, the exposure of which might urge the authorities to reforms. To break with the authorities was to lose the advantages of the Catholic system, and to encourage the violence of those so-called Lutherans, whose extravagances annoyed Luther, and wounded Melancthon. Like Cicero, he remained with men whose defects he saw, for fear of worse. Like Burke, he did not admit that he had ceased to be a reformer, because he refused to join a revolution. Besides, he was now far on, over the shady side of fifty, and plagued by the stone. The young Germans who rallied tumultuously under Luther were of a different generation, and a different training. Something of the wildness of the old forest life belonged to them, and was seen in their Ulric Hutten, with his ready sword, big goblet, and rattling dice-box. Erasmus had been bred amidst the ancient civilization, at once aristocratic and commercial, of the Netherlands. He had seen the refinement of Italy, and of those English scholars who were second—if second—to the Italian scholars alone. A certain aristocracy of scholarship made him shrink from the noisy and often half-educated plebeians, whose devotion to the Gospel was mixed up with an impatience of social distinctions and superior culture. Yet whether he liked them or not he had forwarded their cause, as Voltaire afterwards did that of many a Jacobin whom he would have classed with the *canaille*.

Sic sedebat, in the house of Froben at Basle, or strolled in his garden, Desiderius Erasmus, from 1522 to 1529, while the course of events flowed by him irresistible as the passing Rhine. It was a curious position, for, as he justly says, *utrinque lapidabatur*, he was stoned on both sides. But he stoned both sides, too, the fine old epigrammatist, whose sling never wanted a pebble any more than the bed of the Ilissus in summer time. The Elector Frederick having asked him his opinion of the strife, he said that Luther had done two dangerous things: "He had attacked the Pope's crown and the monks' bellies." He explained his dislike of fish by saying that he had "a Lutheran stomach." When the great Reformer took a wife, he remarked that, "The tragedy like a comedy had ended in a wedding." But to the monkish cry that Antichrist would spring, according to ancient prophecies, from a monk and a nun, "Then surely," said he, "he must have often appeared already!" "Henkel," he observed "has refused a bishoprick, but as times go, it is better to be a hog-driver than a hog." *Bon-mots* like these were the Attic salt with which he seasoned the meat of controversy; and it was characteristic of his essential good nature that they were far more often genial than cynical. Indeed, only his studies saved his later years from being very unhappy. The Lutherans grew more and more angry with him, and Hutten assailed him with fury. Successive Popes and many sovereigns pressed him to write against Luther, but he never did what they wanted; for his dispute with Luther on the Freedom of the Will was not the kind of dispute which they wished to see between them. His old friends, like More and Montjoy, were generally good Catholics, and wondered that he did not exert himself in the cause. Of his younger friends, many were angry with him for precisely the opposite reason. But most of those whom he had longest loved passed away before him—Colet, Ammonius, Warham, Montjoy, and More himself, the likeliest to him in genius of them all. It was from Basle that Erasmus sent Holbein to More, who received him kindly at his house at Chelsea, where he painted the whole family in one group, which he brought to Erasmus in Switzerland, in 1529. "I cannot describe to you"—writes Erasmus that year, from Friburg, to Margaret Roper, Sir Thomas's daughter—"what pleasure I felt when the painter Holbein showed me the entire family, so admirably expressed that I could hardly have seen them better if I had been in their midst. I am often in the habit of wishing that once again, before my last day, I could behold that most dear company to which I owe a great part of whatever fortune or glory I have, and owe it to none more willingly. The ingenious hand of the painter has fulfilled no small part of this. I recognized all, but none more readily than you; seeming to see through its beautiful dwelling the still more beautiful soul shining. . . . Commend me to that most admirable matron your mother. I kissed her image, since I could not be with herself." But the kind-hearted man never saw any of the Mores again; and must have felt one of the bitterest pangs of his lonely old age when he heard of the manner

of Sir Thomas More's death. The public calamities of Europe were private calamities to him. The library of his friend Sadoleto was destroyed in the sack of Rome. The wars, the executions of heretics, the riots in cities, seemed to portend a new barbarism, an extinction of the light of which he had been one of the chief bringers. He protested frequently, at last, that he was quite ready to depart from this life, and did not care though the glory he had acquired should pass away before him.

Erasmus did not spend his whole remaining time at Basle. When the Reformation established itself there, he moved to Friburg, where he stayed for some years. In 1536, he returned to Basle, but only to die. He was on his way to the Low Countries, and put up at the house of Froben, still working to the last. An attack of dysentery brought him to the verge of death in summer, and he predicted the very day of his dissolution. But neither his intellect, patience, nor peculiar vivacity ever failed him. A few days before he died, when his three friends, Froben, Amberbach, and Episcopius, entered his room, he compared them to the three friends of Job, and asked why their garments were not rent, and their heads sprinkled with ashes? He retained his reason to the latest moment, praying to Christ, and to Christ only, and passed away about midnight on the 11th July. He had saved some money, in spite of his poverty and his liberality to others, and left it to form a fund for poor old men, poor scholars, and portionless girls. Great crowds came to see his body. He was carried to his grave in the ancient Cathedral, on the shoulders of students, and laid in the presence of a large and honourable company near the steps leading to the choir, to rest after his labours beside the river which flows away to his native land.



I TRUST THIS WILL MEET YOU AGAIN CYNTHIA

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

AUGUST, 1865.

Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A FLUKE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.



HE honour and glory of having a lover of her own was soon to fall to Molly's share; though to be sure it was a little deduction to the honour that the man who came with the full intention of proposing to her, ended by making Cynthia an offer. It was Mr. Coxe, who came back to Hollingford to follow out the purpose he had announced to Mr. Gibson nearly two years before, of inducing Molly to become his wife as soon as he should have succeeded to his uncle's estate. He was now a rich, though still a red-haired, young man. He came to the George Inn, bringing his horses and his groom; not that he was going to ride much, but that he thought such outward signs of his riches might help on his suit, and he was so justly modest in his estimation of himself that he believed that he needed all extraneous aid. He picked himself on his countenance, and talked, supposing that he had been so much restrained by his duty, his affection, and his expectations to his crabbed old uncle, that he had not been able to go much into society, and very rarely indeed into the company of young ladies, such fidelity to Molly was very unobtrusive, at least in her own

eyes. Mr. Gibson too was touched by it, and made it a point of honour to give him a fair field, all the time sincerely hoping that Molly would not be such a goose as to lend a willing ear to a youth who could never remember the difference between apophysis and epiphysis. He thought it as well not to tell his wife more of Mr. Cox's antecedents than that he had been a former pupil; who had relinquished (all that he knew of, understood) the medical profession because an old uncle had left him enough of money to be idle. Mrs. Gibson, who felt that she had somehow lost her place in her husband's favour, took it into her head that she could reinstate herself if she was successful in finding a good match for his daughter Molly. She knew that her husband had forbidden her to try for this end, as distinctly as words could express a meaning; but her own words so seldom did express her meaning, or if they did, she held to her opinions so loosely that she had no idea but that it was the same with other people. Accordingly she gave Mr. Cox a very sweet and gracious welcome.

"It is such a pleasure to me to make acquaintance with the former pupils of my husband. He had spoken to me so often of you that I quite feel as if you were one of the family, as indeed I am sure that Mr. Gibson considers you."

Mr. Cox felt much flattered, and took the words as a happy omen for his love-affair. "Is Miss Gibson in?" asked he, blushing violently. "I knew her formerly, that is to say, I lived in the same house with her, for more than two years, and it would be a great pleasure"

"Certainly, I am sure she will be so glad to see you. I sent her and Cynthia—you don't know my daughter Cynthia I think, Mr. Cox? She and Molly are such great friends—out for a brisk walk this frosty day, but I think they will soon come back." She went on saying agreeable nothings to the young man, who received her attentions with a certain complacency, but was all the time much more engaged in listening to the well-remembered click at the front door,—the shutting it to again with household care, and the sound of the familiar bounding footstep on the stair. At last they came. Cynthia entered first, bright and blushing, fresh colour in her cheeks and lips, fresh brilliance in her eyes. She looked startled at the sight of a stranger, and for an instant she stopped short at the door, as if taken by surprise. Then she came Molly walking behind her, smiling, happy, dimpled; but not such a glowing beauty as Cynthia.

"Oh, Mr. Cox, is it you?" said she, going up to him with an outstretched hand, and greeting him with simple friendliness.

"Yes; it seems such a long time since I saw you. You are so much grown—so much—well, I suppose I must not say what," he replied, speaking hurriedly, and holding her hand all the time rather to her discomfort. Then Mrs. Gibson introduced her daughter, and the two girls spoke of the enjoyment of their walk. Mr. Cox mused, his eyes in that very first interview, if indeed he ever could have had any chance,

by his precipitancy in shewing his feelings, and Mrs. Gibson helped him to mar it by trying to assist him. Molly lost her open friendliness of manner, and began to shrink away from him in a way which he thought was a very ungrateful return for all his faithfulness to her these two years past, and after all she was not the wonderful beauty his fancy or his love had painted her. That Miss Kirkpatrick was far more beautiful and much easier of access. For Cynthia put on all her pretty airs—her look of intent interest in what any one was saying to her, let the subject be what it would, as if it was the thing she cared the most about in the whole world; her unspoken deference; in short, all the unconscious ways she possessed by instinct of tickling the vanity of men. So while Molly quietly repelled him, Cynthia drew him to her by her soft attractive ways; and his constancy fell before her charms. He was thankful that he had not gone too far with Molly, and grateful to Mr. Gibson for having prohibited all declarations two years ago. For Cynthia, and Cynthia alone, could make him happy. After a fortnight's time, during which he had entirely veered round in his allegiance, he thought it desirable to speak to Mr. Gibson. He did so with a certain sense of exultation in his own correct behaviour in the affair, but at the same time feeling rather ashamed of the confession of his own changeableness which was naturally involved. Now it had so happened that Mr. Gibson had been unusually little at home during the fortnight that Mr. Coxe had ostensibly lodged at the George—but in reality had spent the greater part of his time at Mr. Gibson's house—so that he had seen very little of his former pupil, and on the whole he had thought him improved, especially after Molly's manner had made her father pretty sure that Mr. Coxe stood no chance in that quarter. But Mr. Gibson was quite ignorant of the attraction which Cynthia had had for the young man. If he had perceived it he would have nipped it in the bud pretty quickly, for he had no notion of any girl, even though only partially engaged to one man, receiving offers from others if a little plain speaking could prevent it. Mr. Coxe had asked for a private interview; they were sitting in the old surgery, now called the consulting-room, but still retaining so much of its former self as to be the last place in which Mr. Coxe could feel himself at ease. He was pcd up to the very roots of his red hair, and kept turning his glossy new hat round and round in his fingers, unable to find out the proper way of beginning his sentence, so at length he plunged in, grammar or no grammar.

"Mr. Gibson, I daresay you'll be surprised, I'm sure I am at—at what I want to say; but I think it's the part of an honourable man, as you said yourself, sir, a year or two ago, to—to speak to the father first, and as you, sir, stand in the place of a father to Miss Kirkpatrick, I should like to express my feelings, my hopes, or perhaps I should say wishes, in short—"

"Miss Kirkpatrick!" said Mr. Gibson, a good deal surprised.

"Yes, sir!" continued Mr. Coxe, rushing on now he had got so far

"I know it may appear inconstant and changeable, but I do assure you, I have here with a heart as faithful to your daughter, as ever beat in a woman's bosom. I most fully intended to offer myself and all that I had to her acceptance before I left; but really, sir, if you had seen her manner in the very time I endeavoured to press my suit a little—it was more than any, it was absolutely repellent, there could be no mistaking it,—*While Miss Kirkpatrick—*" he looked modestly down, and smoothed the nap of his hat, smiling a little while he did so.

While Miss Kirkpatrick—?" repeated Mr. Gibson, in such a stern voice, that Mr. Coxe, landed enquire as he was now, felt as much disconcerted as he used to do when he was an apprentice, and Mr. Gibson had spoken to him in a similar manner.

"I was only going to say, sir, that so far as one can judge from manner, and willingness to, listen, and apparent pleasure in my visits—altogether I think I may venture to hope that Miss Kirkpatrick is not quite indifferent to me,—and I would wait,—you have no objection, have you, sir, to my speaking to her, I mean?" said Mr. Coxe, a little anxious at the expression on Mr. Gibson's face. "I do assure you I have not a chance with Miss Gibson," he continued, not knowing what to say, and fancying that his inconstancy was rankling in Mr. Gibson's mind.

"No! I don't suppose you have. Don't go and fancy it is that which is annoying me. You're mistaken about Miss Kirkpatrick, however. I don't believe she could ever have meant to give you encouragement!"

Mr. Coxe's face grew perceptibly paler. His feelings, if evanescent, were evidently strong.

"I think, sir, if you could have seen her—I don't consider myself vain, and manner is so difficult to describe. At any rate, you can have no objection to my taking my chance, and speaking to her."

"Of course, if you won't be convinced otherwise, I can have no objection. But if you'll take my advice, you will spare yourself the pain of a refusal. I may, perhaps, be trenching on confidence, but I think I ought to tell you that her affections are otherwise engaged."

"It cannot be!" said Mr. Coxe. "Mr. Gibson, there must be some mistake. I have gone as far as I dared in expressing my feelings, and her manner has been most gracious. I don't think she could have misunderstood my meaning. Perhaps she has changed her mind? It is possible that, after consideration, she has learnt to prefer another, is it not?"

"By 'another,' you mean yourself, I suppose. I can believe in such inconstancy" (he could not help, in his own mind, giving a slight sneer at the sentence before him), "but I should be very sorry to think that Miss Kirkpatrick could be guilty of it."

"But she may—it is a chance. Will you allow me to see her?"

"Certainly, my good fellow"—for, intermingled with a little politeness, there was a deal of raillery in the simplicity, the earnestness, the directness of his speech, even though the feeling was obviously one of love and admiration.

"Thank you, sir. God bless you for a kind friend!"

Mr. Gibson went upstairs to the drawing-room, where he was pretty sure he should find Cynthia. There she was, as bright and careless as usual, making up a bonnet for her mother, and chattering to Molly as she worked.

"Cynthia, you will oblige me by going down into my consulting-room at once. Mr. Coxe wants to speak to you!"

"Mr. Coxe?" said Cynthia. "What can he want with me?"

Evidently, she answered her own question as soon as it was asked, for she coloured, and avoided meeting Mr. Gibson's severe, uncompromising look. As soon as she had left the room, Mr. Gibson sat down, and took up a new *Edinburgh* lying on the table, as an excuse for conversation. Was there anything in the article that made him say, after a minute or two, to Molly, who sat silent and wondering?—

"Molly, you must never trifle with the love of an honest man. You don't know what pain you may give."

Presently Cynthia came back into the drawing-room, looking very much confused. Most likely she would not have returned if she had known that Mr. Gibson was still there; but it was such an unheard-of thing for him to be sitting in that room in the middle of the day, reading or making pretence to read, that she had never thought of his remaining. He looked up at her the moment she came in, so there was nothing for it but putting a bold face on it, and going back to her work.

"Is Mr. Coxe still downstairs?" asked Mr. Gibson.

"No. He is gone. He asked me to give you both his kind regards. I believe he is leaving this afternoon." Cynthia tried to make her manner as commonplace as possible; but she did not look up, and her voice trembled a little.

Mr. Gibson went on looking at his book for a few minutes; but Cynthia felt that more was coming, and only wished it would come quickly, for the severe silence was very hard to bear. It came at last.

"I trust this will never occur again, Cynthia!" said he, in grave displeasure. "I should not feel satisfied with the conduct of any girl, however free, who could receive marked attentions from a young man with complacency, and so lead him on to make an offer which she never meant to accept. But what must I think of a young woman in your position, engaged—yet, 'accepting most graciously,' for that was the way Clara expressed it—the overtures of another man? Do you consider what unnecessary pain you have given him by your thoughtless behaviour? I call it thoughtless, but it is the mildest epithet I can apply to it. I beg that such a thing may not occur again, or I shall be obliged to communicate it more severely."

Molly could not imagine what "more severely" could be, for her father's manner appeared to her almost cruel in its sternness. Cynthia coloured up extremely, then went pale, and at length raised her head, looking open, full of scorn at Mr. Gibson. He was troubled for that

look, but he resolved immediately not to be mollified by any of her playful "shrieks" of expression, but to keep to his sober judgment of the situation.

"Please, Mr. Gibson, hear my side of the story before you speak so readily to me. I did not mean to—to flirt. I merely meant to make myself agreeable,—I can't help doing that,—and that goose of a Mr. Coxwain seems to have fancied I meant to give him encouragement."

"Do you mean that you were not aware that he was falling in love with you?" Mr. Gibson was melting into a readiness to be convinced by her sweet voice, and pleading face.

"Well, I suppose I must speak truly." Cynthia blushed and smiled a little—but it was a smile, and it hardened Mr. Gibson's heart again. "I did think once or twice that he was becoming a little more complimentary than the occasion required; but I hate throwing cold water on people, and I never thought he could take it into his silly head to fancy himself seriously in love, and to make such a fuss at the last, after only a fortnight's acquaintance."

"You seem to have been pretty well aware of his silliness (I should rather call it simplicity). Don't you think you should have remembered that it might lead him to exaggerate what you were doing and saying into encouragement?"

"Perhaps. I dare say I'm all wrong, and that he is all right," said Cynthia, piqued and pouting. "We used to say in France, that '*les absens ont toujours tort*,' but really it seems as if here——" she stopped. She was unwilling to be impertinent to a man whom she respected and liked. She took up another point of her defence, and rather made matters worse. "Besides, Roger would not allow me to consider myself as finally engaged to him; I would willingly have done it, but he would not let me."

"Nonsense. Don't let us go on talking about it, Cynthia! I have said all that I mean to say. I believe that you were only thoughtless, as I told you before. But don't let it happen again." He left the room at once, to put a stop to the conversation, the continuance of which would serve no useful purpose, and perhaps end by irritating him.

"Not guilty, but we recommended the prisoner not to do it again! It's pretty much that, isn't it, Emily?" said Cynthia, drying her tears off with a handkerchief. "I do believe your father might make a good witness for me yet, or he would only take the pains, and then not quite to serve. And to think of that simple little fellow making all this mischief! He pretended to like it to death, and he had loved me for years, I don't say he says. I dare say they are blacker if the truth were told."

"I was afraid he was becoming very fond of you," said Emily, with a look of concern. "But I know he would not say anything that would only make you uncomfortable, if I said anything that would make you uncomfortable. I am sure I am."

knew he liked me, and I like to be liked; it's born in me to try to make every one I come near fond of me; but then they should not carry it too far, for it becomes very troublesome if they do. I shall hate red-haired people for the rest of my life. To think of such a man as that being the cause of your father's displeasure with me!"

Molly had a question at her tongue's end that she longed to put; she knew it was indiscreet, but at last out it came almost against her will.

"Shall you tell Roger about it?"

Cynthia replied, "I have not thought about it—do! I don't think I shall—there's no need. Perhaps, if we are ever married——"

"Ever married!" said Molly, under her breath. But Cynthia took no notice of the exclamation until she had finished the sentence which it interrupted.

"—— and I can see his face, and know his mood, I may tell it him then; but not in writing, and when he is absent; it might annoy him."

"I am afraid it would make him uncomfortable," said Molly, simply. "And yet, it must be so pleasant to be able to tell him everything—all your difficulties and troubles."

"Yes; only I don't worry him with these things; it is better to write him merry letters, and cheer him up among the black folk. You repeated 'Ever married,' a little while ago; do you know, Molly, I don't think I ever shall be married to him? I don't know why, but I have a strong presentiment, so it's just as well not to tell him all my secrets, for it would be awkward for him to know them if it never came off!"

Molly dropped her work, and sat silent, looking into the future; at length she said, "I think it would break his heart, Cynthia!"

"Nonsense. Why, I am sure that Mr. Coxe came here with the intention of falling in love with you—you need not blush so violently. I am sure you saw it as plainly as I did, only you made yourself disagreeable, and I took pity on him, and consoled his wounded vanity."

"Can you—do you dare to compare Roger Hamley to Mr. Coxe?" asked Molly, indignantly.

"No, no, I don't!" said Cynthia in a moment. "They are as different as man can be. Don't be so dreadfully serious over everything, Molly. You look as oppressed with sad reproach, as if I had been pulling on you the scolding your father gave me."

"Because I don't think you value Roger as you ought, Cynthia!" said Molly stoutly, for it required a good deal of courage to tell herself to say this, although she could not tell why she should be so speaking.

"No, I don't. It's not in my nature to go into sentimentalities, and I don't think I shall ever be what people call 'in love.' But I am glad to hear you, and I like to make you happy, and I shall tell you that all your secrets shall be mine, always excepting your father's, which I shall never tell. What do I say then, Molly? would you like me to be your friend?"

"I know most people think him plain, but——"

"Well, I'm of the opinion of most people then, and small blame to them. But I like his face—oh, ten thousand times better than Mr. Preston's handsomeness!" For the first time during the conversation Cynthia seemed thoroughly in earnest. Why Mrs. Preston was introduced neither she nor Molly knew; it came up and out by a sudden impulse; but a fierce look came into the eyes, and the soft lips contracted themselves as Cynthia named his name. Molly had noticed this look before, always at the mention of this one person.

"Cynthia, what makes you dislike Mr. Preston so much?"

"Don't you? Why do you ask me? and yet, Molly," said she, suddenly relaxing into depression, not merely in tone and look, but in the droop of her limbs—"Molly, what should you think of me if I married him after all?"

"Married him! Has he ever asked you?" But Cynthia, instead of replying to this question, went on, uttering her own thoughts.

"More unlikely things have happened. Have you never heard of strong wills mesmerizing weaker ones into submission? One of the girls at Madame Lefebre's went out as a governess to a Russian family, who lived near Moscow. I sometimes think I'll write to her to get me a situation in Russia, just to get out of the daily chance of seeing that man!"

"But sometimes you seem quite intimate with him, and talk to him——"

"How can I help it?" said Cynthia impatiently. Then recovering herself she added: "We knew him so well at Ashcombe, and he's not a man to be easily thrown off, I can tell you. I must be civil to him; it's not from liking, and he knows it is not, for I've told him so. However, we won't talk about him. I don't know how we came to do it, I'm sure: the mere fact of his existence, and of his being within half a mile of us, is bad enough. Oh! I wish Roger was at home, and rich, and could marry me at once, and carry me away from that man! If I'd thought of it, I really believe I would have taken poor red-haired Mr. Coxe."

"I don't understand it at all," said Molly. "I dislike Mr. Preston, but I should never think of taking such violent steps as you speak of, to get away from the neighbourhood in which he lives."

"No, because you are a reasonable little darling," said Cynthia, resuming her usual manner, and coming up to Molly, and kissing her. "At least you'll acknowledge I'm a good hater!"

"Yes. But still I don't understand it."

"Oh, never mind! There are old complications with our affairs at Ashcombe. Money matters are at the root of it all. Horrid poverty—do let us talk of something else! Or, better still, let me go and finish my letter to Roger, or I shall be too late for the African mail!"

"Is it not gone? Oh, I ought to have reminded you! It will be too late. Did you not see the notice at the post-office that letters for ——

ought to be in London on the morning of the 10th instead of the evening. Oh, I am so sorry !”

“So am I, but it can't be helped. It is to be hoped it will be the greater treat when he does get it. I've a far greater weight on my heart, because your father seems so displeased with me. I was fond of him, and now he is making me quite a coward. You see, Molly,” continued she, a little pitcously, “I've never lived with people with such a high standard of conduct before ; and I don't quite know how to behave.”

“You must learn,” said Molly, tenderly. “You'll find Roger quite as strict in his notions of right and wrong.”

“Ah, but he's in love with me !” said Cynthia, with a pretty consciousness of her power. Molly turned away her head, and was silent ; it was of no use combating the truth, and she tried rather not to feel it—not to feel, poor girl, that she too had a great weight on her heart, into the cause of which she shrank from examining. That whole winter long she had felt as if her sun was all shrouded over with grey mist, and could no longer shine brightly for her. She wakened up in the morning with a dull sense of something being wrong—the world was out of joint, and, if she were born to set it right, she did not know how to do it. Blind herself as she would, she could not help perceiving that her father was not satisfied with the wife he had chosen. For a long time Molly had been surprised at his apparent contentment ; sometimes she had been unselfish enough to be glad that he was satisfied ; but still more frequently nature would have its way, and she was almost irritated at what she considered his blindness. Something, however, had changed him now : something that had arisen at the time of Cynthia's engagement ; he had become nervously sensitive to his wife's failings, and his whole manner had grown dry and sarcastic, not merely to her, but sometimes to Cynthia,—and even—but this very rarely, to Molly herself. He was not a man to go into passions, or ebullitions of feeling : they would have relieved him, even while degrading him in his own eyes ; but he became hard, and occasionally bitter in his speeches and ways. Molly now learnt to long after the vanished blindness in which her father had passed the first year of his marriage ; yet there was no outrageous infractions of domestic peace. Some people might say that Mr. Gibson “accepted the inevitable ;” he told himself in more homely phrase “that it was no use crying over spilt milk ;” and he, from principle, avoided all actual dissensions with his wife, preferring to cut short a discussion by a sarcasm, or by leaving the room. Moreover, Mrs. Gibson had a very tolerable temper of her own, and her cat-like nature purred and delighted in smooth ways, and pleasant quietness. She had no great facility for understanding sarcasm ; it is true it disturbed her, but as she was not quick at deciphering any depth of meaning, and felt it to be unpleasant to think about it, she forgot it as soon as possible. Yet she saw she was often in some kind of disfavour with her husband, and it made her uneasy. She resembled Cynthia in this ; she liked to be liked ; and she wanted to regain the esteem which

she did not perceive she had lost for ever. Molly sometimes took her stepmother's part in secret; she felt as if she herself could never have borne her father's hard speeches so patiently: they would have cut her to the heart, and she must either have demanded an explanation, and probed the sore to the bottom, or sat down despairing and miserable. Instead of which Mrs. Gibson, after her husband had left the room, on these occasions would say in a manner more bewildered than hurt—

"I think dear papa seems a little put out to-day; we must see that he has a dinner that he likes when he comes home. I have often perceived that everything depends on making a man comfortable in his own house."

And thus she went on, groping about to find the means of reinstating herself in his good graces—really trying, according to her lights, till Molly was often compelled to pity her in spite of herself, and although she saw that her stepmother was the cause of her father's increased astringency of disposition. For indeed he had got into that kind of exaggerated susceptibility with regard to his wife's faults, which may be best typified by the state of bodily irritation that is produced by the constant recurrence of any particular noise: those who are brought within hearing of it, are apt to be always on the watch for the repetition, if they are once made to notice it, and are in an irritable state of nerves.

So that poor Molly had not passed a cheerful winter, independently of any private sorrows that she might have in her own heart. She did not look well, either; she was gradually falling into low health, rather than bad health. Her heart beat more feebly and slower; the vivifying stimulant of hope—even unacknowledged hope—was gone out of her life. It seemed as if there was not, and never could be in this world, any help for the dumb discordancy between her father and his wife. Day after day, month after month, year after year, would Molly have to sympathize with her father, and pity her stepmother, feeling acutely for both, and certainly more than Mrs. Gibson felt for herself. Molly could not imagine how she had at one time wished for her father's eyes to be opened, and how she could ever have fancied that if they were, he would be able to change things in Mrs. Gibson's character. It was all hopeless, and the only attempt at a remedy was to think about it as little as possible. Then Cynthia's ways and manners about Roger gave Molly a great deal of uneasiness. She did not believe that Cynthia cared enough for him; at any rate, not with the sort of love that she herself would have bestowed, if she had been so happy—no, that was not it—if she had been in Cynthia's place. She felt as if she should have gone to him both hands held out, full and brimming over with tenderness, and been grateful for every word of precious confidence bestowed on her. Yet Cynthia received his letters with a kind of carelessness, and read them with a strange indifference, while Molly sat at her feet, so to speak, looking up with eyes as wistful as a dog's waiting for crumbs, and such chance beneficences.

She tried to be patient on these occasions, but at last she must ask—"Where is he, Cynthia? What does he say?" By this time Cynthia had put down the letter on the table by her, smiling a little from time to time, as she remembered the loving compliments it contained.

"Where? Oh, I did not look exactly—somewhere in Abyssinia—Huon. I can't read the word, and it does not much signify, for it would give me no idea."

"Is he well?" asked greedy Molly.

"Yes, now. He has had a slight touch of fever, he says; but it's all over now, and he hopes he is getting acclimatized."

"Of fever!—and who took care of him? he would want nursing—and so far from home. Oh, Cynthia!"

"Oh, I don't fancy he had any nursing, poor fellow! One does not expect nursing, and hospitals, and doctors in Abyssinia; but he had plenty of quinine with him, and I suppose that is the best specific. At any rate, he says he is quite well now!"

Molly sate silent for a minute or two.

"What is the date of the letter, Cynthia?"

"I did not look. December the—December the 10th."

"That's nearly two months ago," said Molly.

"Yes; but I determined I would not worry myself with useless anxiety, when he went away. If anything did—go wrong, you know," said Cynthia, using an euphuism for death, as most people do (it is an ugly word to speak plain out in the midst of life), "it would be all over before I even heard of his illness, and I could be of no use to him—could I, Molly?"

"No. I daresay it is all very true; only I should think the squire could not take it so easily."

"I always write him a little note when I hear from Roger, but I don't think I'll name this touch of fever—shall I, Molly?"

"I don't know," said Molly. "People say one ought, but I almost wish I had not heard it. Please, does he say anything else that I may hear?"

"Oh, lovers' letters are so silly, and I think this is sillier than usual," said Cynthia, looking over her letter again. "Here's a piece you may read, from that line to that," indicating two places. "I have not read it myself for it looked dullish—all about Aristotle and Pliny—and I want to get this bonnet-cap made up before we go out to pay our calls."

Molly took the letter, the thought crossing her mind that he had touched it, had had his hands upon it, in those far-distant desert lands, where he might be lost to sight and to any human knowledge of his fate; even now her pretty brown fingers almost caressed the flimsy paper with their delicacy of touch as she read. She saw references made to books, which, with a little trouble, would be accessible to her here in Hollingford. Perhaps the details and the references would make the letter dull and dry to some people, but not to her, thanks to his former teaching and the interest he had excited in her for his pursuits. But, as he said in apology;

what had he to write about in that savage land, but his love, and his researches, and travels? There was no society, no gaiety, no new books to write about, no gossip in Abyssinian wilds.

Molly was not in strong health, and perhaps this made her a little fanciful; but certain it is that her thoughts by day and her dreams by night were haunted by the idea of Roger lying ill and untended in those savage lands. Her constant prayer, "O my Lord! give her the living child, and in no wise slay it," came from a heart as true as that of the real mother in King Solomon's judgment. "Let him live, let him live, even though I may never set eyes upon him again. Have pity upon his father! Grant that he may come home safe, and live happily with her whom he loves so tenderly—so tenderly, O God." And then she would burst into tears, and drop asleep at last, sobbing.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MR. KIRKPATRICK, Q. C.

CYNTHIA was always the same with Molly: kind, sweet-tempered, ready to help, professing a great deal of love for her, and probably feeling as much as she did for any one in the world. But Molly had reached to this superficial depth of affection and intimacy in the first few weeks of Cynthia's residence in her father's house; and if she had been of a nature prone to analyse the character of one whom she loved dearly, she might have perceived that, with all Cynthia's apparent frankness, there were certain limits beyond which her confidence did not go; where her reserve began, and her real self was shrouded in mystery. For instance, her relations with Mr. Preston were often very puzzling to Molly. She was sure that there had been a much greater intimacy between them formerly at Ashcombe, and that the remembrance of this was often very galling and irritating to Cynthia, who was as evidently desirous of forgetting it as he was anxious to make her remember it. But why this intimacy had ceased, why Cynthia disliked him so extremely now, and many other unexplained circumstances connected with these two facts, were Cynthia's secrets; and she effectually baffled all Molly's innocent attempts during the first glow of her friendship for Cynthia, to learn the girlish antecedents of her companion's life. Every now and then Molly came to a dead wall, beyond which she could not pass—at least with the delicate instruments which were all she chose to use. Perhaps Cynthia might have told all there was to tell to a more forcible curiosity, which knew how to improve every slip of the tongue and every fit of temper to its own gratification. But Molly's was the interest of affection, not the coarser desire of knowing everything for a little excitement; and as soon as she saw that Cynthia did not wish to tell her anything about that period of her life, Molly left off referring to it. But if Cynthia had preserved a sweet tranquillity of manner and an unvarying kindness for Molly during the winter of which

there is question, at present she was the only person to whom the beauty's ways were unchanged. Mr. Gibson's influence had been good for her as long as she saw that he liked her; she had tried to keep as high a place in his good opinion as she could, and had curbed many a little sarcasm against her mother, and many a twisting of the absolute truth when he was by. Now there was a constant uneasiness about her which made her more cowardly than before; and even her partisan, Molly, could not help being aware of the distinct equivocations she occasionally used when anything in Mr. Gibson's words or behaviour pressed her too hard. Her repartees to her mother were less frequent than they had been, but there was often the unusual phenomenon of pettishness in her behaviour to Mrs. Gibson. These changes in humour and disposition, here described all at once, were in themselves a series of delicate alterations of relative conduct spread over many months—many winter months of long evenings and bad weather, which bring out discords of character, as a dash of cold water brings out the fading colours of an old fresco.

During much of this time Mr. Preston had been at Ashcombe; for Lord Cumnor had not been able to find an agent whom he liked to replace Mr. Preston; and while the inferior situation remained vacant Mr. Preston had undertaken to do the duties of both. Mrs. Goodenough had had a serious illness; and the little society at Hollingsford did not care to meet while one of their habitual set was scarcely out of danger. So there had been very little visiting; and though Miss Browning said that the absence of the temptations of society was very agreeable to cultivated minds, after the dissipations of the previous autumn, when there were parties every week to welcome Mr. Preston, yet Miss Phoebe let out in confidence that she and her sister had fallen into the habit of going to bed at nine o'clock, for they found cribbage night after night, from five o'clock till ten, rather too much of a good thing. To tell the truth, that winter, if peaceful, was monotonous in Hollingsford; and the whole circle of gentility there was delighted to be stirred up in March by the intelligence that Mr. Kirkpatrick, the newly-made Q.C., was coming on a visit of a couple of days to his sister-in-law Mrs. Gibson. Mrs. Goodenough's room was the very centre of gossip; gossip had been her daily bread through her life, gossip was meat and wine to her now.

"Dear-ah-me!" said the old lady, rousing herself so as to sit upright in her easy chair, and propping herself with her hands on the arms; "who would ha' thought she'd such grand relations! Why, Mr. Ashton told me once that a Queen's counsel was as like to be a judge as a kitten is like to be a cat. And to think of her being as good as a sister to a judge! I saw one once; and I know I thought as I should not wish for a better winter-cloak than his old robes would make me, if I could only find out where I could get them second-hand. And I know she'd her silk gowns turned and dyed and cleaned, and, for aught I know, turned again, while she lived at Ashcombe. Keeping a school, too, and so near akin to this Queen's counsel all the time! Well, to be sure, it was not much of a

school—only ten young ladies at the best o' times ; so perhaps he never heard of it."

"I've been wondering what they'll give him to dinner," said Miss Browning. "It is an unlucky time for visitors; no game to be had, and lamb so late this year, and chicken hardly to be had for love or money."

"He'll have to put up with calves' head, that he will," said Mrs. Goodenough, solemnly. "If I'd ha' got my usual health I'd copy out a receipt of my grandmother's for a rolled calves' head, and send it to Mrs. Gibson,—the doctor has been very kind to me all through this illness,—I wish my daughter in Combermere would send me some autumn chickens—I'd pass 'em on to the doctor, that I would ; but she's been a-killing of 'em all, and a-sending of them to me, and the last she sent she wrote me word was the last."

"I wonder if they'll give a party for him!" suggested Miss Phoebe. "I should like to see a Queen's counsel for once in my life. I have seen javelin-men, but that's the greatest thing in the legal line I ever came across."

"They'll ask Mr. Ashton, of course," said Miss Browning. "The three black graces, Law, Physic, and Divinity, as the song calls them. Whenever there's a second course, there's always the clergyman of the parish invited in any family of gentility."

"I wonder if he's married!" said Mrs. Goodenough. Miss Phoebe had been feeling the same wonder, but had not thought it maidenly to express it, even to her sister, who was the source of knowledge, having met Mrs. Gibson in the street on her way to Mrs. Goodenough's.

"Yes, he's married, and must have several children, for Mrs. Gibson said that Cynthia Kirkpatrick had paid them a visit in London, to have lessons with her cousins. And she said that his wife was a most accomplished woman, and of good family, though she brought him no fortune."

"It's a very creditable connection, I'm sure ; it's only a wonder to me as how we've heard so little talk of it before," said Mrs. Goodenough. "At the first look of the thing, I should not ha' thought Mrs. Gibson was one to hide away her fine relations under a bushel; indeed for that matter we're all of us fond o' turning the best breadth of the gown to the front. I remember, speaking o' breadths, how I've undone my skirts many a time and oft to put a stain or a grease-spot next to poor Mr. Goodenough. He'd a soft kind of heart when first we was married, and he said, says he, 'Patty, link thy right arm into my left one, then thou'll be nearer to my heart;' and so we kept up the habit, when, poor man, he'd a deal more to think on than romancing on which side his heart lay; so as I said I always put my damaged breadths on the right hand, and when we walked arm in arm, as we always did, no one was never the wiser."

"I should not be surprised if he invited Cynthia to pay him another

visit in London," said Miss Browning. "If he did it when he was poor, he's twenty times more likely to do it now he's a Queen's counsel."

"Ay, work it by the rule o' three, and she stands a good chance. I only hope it won't turn her head; going up visiting in London at her age. Why, I was fifty before ever I went!"

"But she has been in France, she's quite a travelled young lady," said Miss Phoebe.

Mrs. Goodenough shook her head, for a whole minute before she gave vent to her opinion.

"It's a risk," said she, "a great risk. I don't like saying so to the doctor, but I should not like having my daughter, if I was him, so cheek-by-jowl with a girl as was brought up in the country where Robespierre and Bonyparte was born."

"But Buonaparte was a Corsican," said Miss Browning, who was much farther advanced both in knowledge and in liberality of opinions than Mrs. Goodenough. "And there's a great opportunity for cultivation of the mind afforded by intercourse with foreign countries. I always admire Cynthia's grace of manner, never too shy to speak, yet never putting herself forwards; she's quite a help to a party; and if she has a few airs and graces, why they're natural at her age! Now as for dear Molly, there's a kind of awkwardness about her—she broke one of our best china cups last time she was at a party at our house, and spilt the coffee on the new carpet; and then she got so confused that she hardly did anything but sit in a corner and hold her tongue all the rest of the evening."

"She was so sorry for what she'd done, sister," said Miss Phoebe, in a gentle tone of reproach; she was always faithful to Molly.

"Well, and did I say she wasn't? but was there any need for her to be stupid all the evening after."

"But you were rather sharp,—rather displeased——"

"And I think it my duty to be sharp, ay, and cross too, when I see young folks careless. And when I see my duty clear I do it; I'm not one to shrink from it, and they ought to be grateful to me. It's not every one that will take the trouble of reproving them, as Mrs. Goodenough knows. I'm very fond of Molly Gibson, very, for her own sake and for her mother's too; I'm not sure if I don't think she's worth half-a-dozen Cythias, but for all that she should not break my best china tea-cup, and then sit doing nothing for her livelihood all the rest of the evening."

By this time Mrs. Goodenough gave evident signs of being tired; Molly's misdemeanors and Miss Browning's broken tea-cup were not as exciting subjects of conversation as Mrs. Gibson's newly-discovered good luck in having a successful London lawyer for a relation.

Mr. Kirkpatrick had been, like many other men, struggling on in his profession, and encumbered with a large family of his own; he was ready to do a good turn for his connections, if it occasioned him no loss of time, and if (which was, perhaps, a primary condition) he remembered

their existence. Cynthia's visit to Doughty Street nine or ten years ago had not made much impression upon him after he had once suggested its feasibility to his good-natured wife. He was even rather startled every now and then by the appearance of a pretty little girl amongst his own children, as they trooped in to dessert, and had to remind himself who she was. But as it was his custom to leave the table almost immediately and to retreat into a small back-room called his study, to immerse himself in papers for the rest of the evening, the child had not made much impression upon him; and probably the next time he remembered her existence was when Mrs. Kirkpatrick wrote to him to beg him to receive Cynthia for a night on her way to school at Boulogne. The same request was repeated on her return; but it so happened that he had not seen her either time; and only dimly remembered some remarks which his wife had made on one of these occasions, that it seemed to her rather hazardous to send so young a girl so long a journey without making more provision for her safety than Mrs. Kirkpatrick had done. He knew that his wife would fill up all deficiencies in this respect as if Cynthia had been her own daughter; and thought no more about her until he received an invitation to attend Mrs. Kirkpatrick's wedding with Mr. Gibson, the highly-esteemed surgeon of Hollingford, &c. &c.—an attention which irritated instead of pleasing him. "Does the woman think I have nothing to do but run about the country in search of brides and bridegrooms, when this great case of *Houghton v. Houghton* is coming on, and I have not a moment to spare?" he asked of his wife.

"Perhaps she never heard of it," suggested Mrs. Kirkpatrick.

"Nonsense! the case has been in the papers for days."

"But she mayn't know you are engaged in it."

"She mayn't," said he, meditatively—such ignorance was possible.

But now the great case of *Houghton v. Houghton* was a thing of the past; the hard struggle was over, the comparative table-land of Q. C.-dom gained, and Mr. Kirkpatrick had leisure for family feeling and recollection. One day in the Easter vacation he found himself near Hollingford; he had a Sunday to spare, and he wrote to offer himself as a visitor to the Gibsons from Friday to Monday, expressing strongly (what he really felt, in a less degree,) his wish to make Mr. Gibson's acquaintance. Mr. Gibson, though often overwhelmed with professional business, was always hospitable; and moreover, it was always a pleasure to him to get out of the somewhat confined mental atmosphere which he had breathed over and over again, and have a whiff of fresh air: a glimpse of what was passing in the great world beyond his daily limits of thought and action. So he was ready to give a cordial welcome to his unknown relation. Mrs. Gibson was in a flutter of sentimental delight, which she fancied was family affection, but which might not have been quite so effervescent if Mr. Kirkpatrick had remained in his former position of struggling lawyer, with seven children, living in Doughty Street.

When the two gentlemen met they were attracted towards each other

by a similarity of character, with just enough difference in their opinions to make the experience of each, on which such opinions were based, valuable to the other. To Mrs. Gibson, although the bond between them counted for very little in their intercourse, Mr. Kirkpatrick paid very polite attention; and was, in fact, very glad that she had done so well for herself as to marry a sensible and agreeable man, who was able to keep her in comfort, and to behave to her daughter in so liberal a manner. Molly struck him as a delicate-looking girl, who might be very pretty if she had had a greater look of health and animation: indeed, looking at her critically, there were beautiful points about her face—long soft grey eyes, black curling eyelashes, rarely showing dimples, perfect teeth; but there was a languor over all, a slow depression of manner, which contrasted unfavourably with the brightly-coloured Cynthia, sparkling, quick, graceful, and witty. As Mr. Kirkpatrick expressed it afterwards to his wife, he was quite in love with that girl; and Cynthia, as ready to captivate strangers as any little girl of three or four, rose to the occasion, forgot all her cares and despondencies, remembered no longer her regret at having lost something of Mr. Gibson's good opinion, and listened eagerly and made soft replies, intermixed with naive sallies of droll humour, till Mr. Kirkpatrick was quite captivated. He left Hollingford, almost surprised to have performed a duty, and found it a pleasure. For Mrs. Gibson and Molly he had a general friendly feeling; but he did not care if he never saw them again. But for Mr. Gibson he had a warm respect, a strong personal liking, which he should be glad to have ripen into a friendship, if there was time for it in this bustling world. And he fully resolved to see more of Cynthia; his wife must know her; they must have her up to stay with them in London, and show her something of the world. But, on returning home, Mr. Kirkpatrick found so much work awaiting him that he had to lock up embryo friendships and kindly plans in some safe closet of his mind, and give himself up, body and soul, to the immediate work of his profession. But, in May, he found time to take his wife to the Academy Exhibition, and some portrait there, striking him as being like Cynthia, he told his wife more about her and his visit to Hollingford than he had ever had leisure to do before; and the result was that on the next day a letter was sent off to Mrs. Gibson, inviting Cynthia to pay a visit to her cousins in London, and reminding her of many little circumstances that had occurred when she was with them as a child, so as to carry on the clue of friendship from that time to the present.

On its receipt this letter was greeted in various ways by the four people who sat round the breakfast-table. Mrs. Gibson read it to herself first. Then, without telling what its contents were, so that her auditors were quite in the dark as to what her remarks applied, she said,—

"I think they might have remembered that I am a generation nearer to them than she is, but nobody thinks of family affection now-a-days; and I liked him so much, and bought a new cookery-book, all to make it

pleasant and agreeable and what he was used to." She said all this in a plaintive, aggrieved tone of voice ; but as no one knew to what she was referring, it was difficult to offer her consolation. Her husband was the first to speak.

"If you want us to sympathize with you, tell us what is the nature of your woe."

"Why, I daresay it's what he means as a very kind attention, only I think I ought to have been asked before Cynthia," said she, reading the letter over again.

"Who's *he* ? and what's meant for a 'kind attention'?"

"Mr. Kirkpatrick, to be sure. This letter is from him ; and he wants Cynthia to go and pay them a visit, and never says anything about you or me, my dear. And I'm sure we did our best to make it pleasant ; and he should have asked us first, I think."

"As I could not possibly have gone, it makes very little difference to me."

"But I could have gone ; and, at any rate, he should have paid us the compliment : it's only a proper mark of respect, you know. So ungrateful, too, when I gave up my dressing-room on purpose for him !"

"And I dressed for dinner every day he was here, if we are each to recapitulate all our sacrifices on his behalf. But for all that I did not expect to be invited to his house. I shall be only too glad if he will come again to mine."

"I've a great mind not to let Cynthia go," said Mrs. Gibson, reflectively.

"I can't go, mamma," said Cynthia, colouring. "My gowns are all so shabby, and my old bonnet must do for the summer."

"Well, but you can buy a new one ; and I'm sure it is high time you should get yourself another silk-gown. You must have been saving up a great deal, for I don't know when you've had any new clothes."

Cynthia began to say something, but stopped short. She went on buttering her toast, but she held it in her hand without eating it ; without looking up either, as, after a minute or two of silence, she spoke again :—

"I cannot go. . I should like it very much ; but I really cannot go. Please, mamma, write at once, and refuse it."

"Nonsense, child ! When a man in Mr. Kirkpatrick's position comes forward to offer a favour, it does not do to decline it without giving a sufficient reason. So kind of him as it is, too !"

"Suppose you offer to go instead of me ?" proposed Cynthia.

"No, no ! that won't do," said Mr. Gibson, decidedly. "You can't transfer invitations in that way. But really this excuse about your clothes does appear to be very trivial, Cynthia, if you have no other reason to give."

"It is a real, true reason to me," said Cynthia, looking up at him as she spoke. "You must let me judge for myself. It would not do to go there in a state of shabbiness, for even in Doughty Street, I remember, my aunt was very particular about dress ; and now that Margaret and

Helen are grown up, and they visit so much,—pray don't say anything more about it, for I know it would not do."

"What have you done with all your money, I wonder?" said Mrs. Gibson. "You've twenty pounds a year, thanks to Mr. Gibson and me; and I'm sure you haven't spent more than ten."

"I had not many things when I came back from France," said Cynthia, in a low voice, and evidently troubled by all this questioning. "Pray let it be decided at once; I can't go, and there's an end of it." She got up, and left the room rather suddenly.

"I don't understand it at all," said Mrs. Gibson. "Do you, Molly?"

"No. I know she does not like spending money on her dress, and is very careful." Molly said this much, and then was afraid she had made mischief.

"But then she must have got the money somewhere. It always has struck me that if you have not extravagant habits, and do not live up to your income, you must have a certain sum to lay by at the end of the year. Have I not often said so, Mr. Gibson?"

"Probably."

"Well, then, apply the same reasoning to Cynthia's case; and then, I ask, what has become of the money?"

"I cannot tell," said Molly, seeing that she was appealed to. "She may have given it away to some one who wants it."

Mr. Gibson put down his newspaper.

"It is very clear that she has neither got the dress nor the money necessary for this London visit, and that she does not want any more inquiries to be made on the subject. She likes mysteries, in fact, and I detest them. Still, I think it is a desirable thing for her to keep up the acquaintance, or friendship, or whatever it is to be called, with her father's family; and I shall gladly give her ten pounds; and if that's not enough, why, either you must help her out, or she must do without some superfluous article of dress or another."

"I'm sure there never was such a kind, dear, generous man as you are, Mr. Gibson," said his wife. "To think of your being a stepfather! and so good to my poor fatherless girl! But, Molly my dear, I think you'll acknowledge that you too are very fortunate in your stepmother. Are not you, love? And what happy tête-à-têtes we shall have together when Cynthia goes to London. I'm not sure if I don't get on better with you even than with her, though she is my own child; for, as dear papa says so truly, there is a love of mystery about her; and if I hate anything, it is the slightest concealment or reserve. Ten pounds! Why, it will quite set her up, buy her a couple of gowns and a new bonnet, and I don't know what all! Dear Mr. Gibson, how generous you are!"

Something very like "Pshaw!" was growled out from behind the newspaper.

"May I go and tell her?" said Molly, rising up.

"Yes, do, love. Tell her it would be so ungrateful to refuse; and tell her that your father wishes her to go; and tell her, too, that it would be quite wrong not to avail herself of an opening which may by-and-by be extended to the rest of the family. I am sure if they ask me—which certainly they ought to do—I won't say before they asked Cynthia, because I never think of myself, and am really the most forgiving person in the world, in forgiving slights;—but when they do ask me, which they are sure to do, I shall never be content till, by putting in a little hint here and a little hint there, I've induced them to send you an invitation. A month or two in London would do you so much good, Molly."

Molly had left the room before this speech was ended, and Mr. Gibson was occupied with his newspaper; but Mrs. Gibson finished it to herself very much to her own satisfaction: for, after all, it was better to have some one of the family going on the visit, though she might not be the right person, than to refuse it altogether, and never to have the opportunity of saying anything about it. As Mr. Gibson was so kind to Cynthia, she too would be kind to Molly, and dress her becomingly, and invite young men to the house; do all the things, in fact, which Molly and her father did not want to have done, and throw the old stumbling-blocks in the way of their unrestrained intercourse, which was the one thing they desired to have, free and open, and without the constant dread of her jealousy.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SECRET THOUGHTS OOZE OUT.

MOLLY found Cynthia in the drawing-room, standing in the bow-window, looking out on the garden. She started as Molly came up to her.

"Oh, Molly," said she, putting her arms out towards her, "I am always so glad to have you with me!"

It was outbursts of affection such as these that always called Molly back, if she had been ever so unconsciously wavering in her allegiance to Cynthia. She had been wishing downstairs that Cynthia would be less reserved, and not have so many secrets; but now it seemed almost like treason to have wanted her to be anything but what she was. Never had any one more than Cynthia the power spoken of by Goldsmith when he wrote—

He threw off his friends like a huntsman his pack,
For he knew when he liked he could whistle them back.

"Do you know, I think you'll be glad to hear what I've got to tell you?" said Molly. "I think you would really like to go to London; should not you?"

"Yes, but it is of no use liking," said Cynthia. "Don't you begin about it, Molly, for the thing is settled; and I can't tell you why, but I can't go."

"It is only the money, dear. And papa has been so kind about it.

He wants you to go; he thinks you ought to keep up relationships; and he is going to give you ten pounds."

"How kind he is!" said Cynthia. "But I ought not to take it. I wish I had known you years ago; I should have been different to what I am."

"Never mind that! We like you as you are; we don't want you different. You'll really hurt papa if you don't take it. Why do you hesitate? Do you think Roger won't like it?"

"Roger! no, I was not thinking about him! Why should he care? I shall be there and back again before he even hears about it."

"Then you will go?" said Molly.

Cynthia thought for a minute or two. "Yes, I will," said she, at length. "I daresay it's not wise, but it will be pleasant, and I'll go. Where is Mr. Gibson? I want to thank him. Oh, how kind he is! Molly, you're a lucky girl!"

"I?" said Molly, quite startled at being told this; for she had been feeling as if so many things were going wrong, almost as if they would never go right again.

"There he is!" said Cynthia. "I hear him in the hall!" And down she flew, and laying her hands on Mr. Gibson's arm, she thanked him with such warm impulsiveness, and in so pretty and caressing a manner, that something of his old feeling of personal liking for her returned, and he forgot for a time the causes of disapproval he had against her.

"There, there!" said he, "that's enough, my dear! It is quite right you should keep up with your relations; there's nothing more to be said about it."

"I do think your father is the most charming man I know," said Cynthia, on her return to Molly; "and it's that which always makes me so afraid of losing his good opinion, and fret so when I think he is displeased with me. And now let us think all about this London visit. It will be delightful, won't it? I can make ten pounds go ever so far; and in some ways it will be such a comfort to get out of Hollingford."

"Will it?" said Molly, rather wistfully.

"Oh, yes! You know I don't mean that it will be a comfort to leave you; that will be anything but a comfort. But, after all, a country town is a country town, and London is London. You need not smile at my truisms; I've always had a sympathy with M. de la Palisse,—

*M. de la Palisse est mort
En perdant sa vie;
Un quart d'heure avant sa mort
Il était en vie.*

sang she, in so gay a manner that she puzzled Molly, as she often did, by her change of mood from the gloomy decision with which she had refused to accept the invitation only half an hour ago. She suddenly took Molly round the waist, and began waltzing round the room with her, to the

imminent danger of the various little tables, loaded with "objets d'art" (as Mrs. Gibson delighted to call them) with which the drawing-room was crowded. She avoided them, however, with her usual skill; but they both stood still at last, surprised at Mrs. Gibson's surprise, as she stood at the door, looking at the whirl going on before her.

"Upon my word, I only hope you are not going crazy, both of you? What's all this about, pray?"

"Only because I'm so glad I'm going to London, mamma," said Cynthia, demurely.

"I'm not sure if it's quite the thing for an engaged young lady to be so much beside herself at the prospect of gaiety. In my time, our great pleasure in our lovers' absence was in thinking about them."

"I should have thought that would have given you pain, because you would have had to remember that they were away, which ought to have made you unhappy. Now, to tell you the truth, just at the moment I had forgotten all about Roger. I hope it was not very wrong. Osborne looks as if he did all my share as well as his own of the fretting after Roger. How ill he looked yesterday!"

"Yes," said Molly; "I did not know if any one besides me had noticed it. I was quite shocked."

"Ah," said Mrs. Gibson, "I'm afraid that young man won't live long—very much afraid," and she shook her head ominously.

"Oh, what will happen if he dies!" exclaimed Molly, suddenly sitting down, and thinking of that strange, mysterious wife who never made her appearance, whose very existence was never spoken about—and Roger away too!

"Well, it would be very sad, of course, and we should all feel it very much, I've no doubt; for I've always been very fond of Osborne; in fact, before Roger became, as it were, my own flesh and blood, I liked Osborne better: but we must not forget the living, dear Molly" (for Molly's eyes were filling with tears at the dismal thoughts presented to her). "Our dear good Roger would, I am sure, do all in his power to fill Osborne's place in any way; and his marriage need not be so long delayed."

"Don't speak of that in the same breath as Osborne's life, mamma," said Cynthia, hastily.

"Why, my dear, it is a very natural thought. For poor Roger's sake, you know, one wishes it not to be so very very long an engagement; and I was only answering Molly's question, after all. One can't help following out one's thoughts. People must die, you know—young, as well as old."

"If I ever suspected Roger of following out his thoughts in a similar way," said Cynthia, "I'd never speak to him again."

As if he would! said Molly, warm in her turn. "You know he ~~never~~ would; and you should not suppose it of him, Cynthia—no, not even for a moment!"

"I can't see the great harm of it all, for my part," said Mrs. Gibson, plaintively. "A young man strikes us all as looking very ill—and I'm sure I'm sorry for it; but illness very often leads to death. Surely you agree with me there, and what's the harm of saying so? Then Molly asks what will happen if he dies; and I try to answer her question. I don't like talking or thinking of death any more than any one else; but I should think myself wanting in strength of mind if I could not look forward to the consequences of death. I really think we're commanded to do so, somewhere in the Bible or the Prayer-book."

"Do you look forward to the consequences of my death, mamma?" asked Cynthia.

"You really are the most unfeeling girl I ever met with," said Mrs. Gibson, really hurt. "I wish I could give you a little of my own sensitiveness, for I have too much for my happiness. Don't let us speak of Osborne's looks again; ten to one it was only some temporary over-fatigue, or some anxiety about Roger, or perhaps a little fit of indigestion. I was very foolish to attribute it to anything more serious, and dear papa might be displeased if he knew I had done so. Medical men don't like other people to be making conjectures about health; they consider it as trenching on their own particular province, and very proper I'm sure. Now let us consider about your dress, Cynthia; I could not understand how you had spent your money, and made so little show with it."

"Mamma! it may sound very cross, but I must tell Molly and you, and everybody, once for all, that as I don't want and did not ask for more than my allowance, I'm not going to answer any questions about what I do with it." She did not say this with any want of respect; but she said it with quiet determination, which subdued her mother for the time, though often afterwards when Mrs. Gibson and Molly were alone, the former would start the wonder as to what Cynthia could possibly have done with her money, and hint each poor conjecture through words and volleys of doubt, till she was wearied out; and the exciting sport was given up for the day. At present, however, she confined herself to the practical matter in hand; and the genius for millinery and dress, inherent in both mother and daughter, soon settled a great many knotty points of contrivance and taste, and then they all three set to work to "gar auld claes look amaisht as weel's the new."

Cynthia's relations with the squire had been very stationary ever since the visit she had paid to the Hall the previous autumn. He had received them all at that time with hospitable politeness, and he had also been more charmed with Cynthia than he liked to acknowledge to himself when he thought the visit all over afterwards.

"She's a pretty lass sure enough," thought he, "and has pretty ways about her too, and likes to learn from older people, which is a good sign; but somehow I don't like madam her mother, but still she is her mother, and the girl is her daughter; yet she spoke to her once or twice as I should not ha' liked our little Fanny to have spoken, if it had pleased God,

for her to ha' lived. No, it's not the right way, and it may be a bit old-fashioned, but I like the right way. And then again she took possession o' me as I may say, and little Molly had to run after us in the garden walks that are too narrow for three, just like a little four-legged doggie; and the other was so full of listening to me, she never turned round for to speak a word to Molly. I don't mean to say they're not fond of each other, and that's in Roger's sweetheart's favour, and it's very ungrateful in me to go and find fault with a lass who was so civil to me, and had such a pretty way with her of hanging on every word that fell from my lips. Well! a deal may come and go in two years! and the lad says nothing to me about it. I'll be as deep as him, and take no more notice of the affair till he comes home and tells me himself."

So although the squire was always delighted to receive the little notes which Cynthia sent to him every time she heard from Roger, and although this attention on her part was melting the heart he tried to harden, he controlled himself into writing her the briefest acknowledgments. His words were strong in meaning, but formal in expression; she herself did not think much about them, being satisfied to do the kind actions that called them forth. But her mother criticized them and pondered them. She thought she had hit on the truth when she had decided in her own mind that it was a very old-fashioned style, and that he and his house and his furniture all wanted some of the brightening up and polishing which they were sure to receive, when—she never quite liked to finish the sentence definitely, although she kept repeating to herself that "there was no harm in it."

To return to the squire. Occupied as he now was, he recovered his former health, and something of his former cheerfulness. If Osborne had met him half-way, it is probable that the old bond between father and son might have been renewed; but Osborne either was really an invalid, or had sunk into invalid habits, and made no effort to rally. If his father urged him to go out—nay, once or twice he gulped down his pride, and asked Osborne to accompany him—Osborne would go to the window and find out some flaw or speck in the wind or weather, and make that an excuse for stopping in the house over his books. He would saunter out on the sunny side of the house in a manner that the squire considered as both indolent and unmanly. Yet if there was a prospect of his leaving home, which he did pretty often about this time, he was seized with a hectic energy: the clouds in the sky, the easterly wind, the dampness of the air, were nothing to him then; and as the squire did not know the real secret cause of this anxiety to be gone, he took it into his head that it arose from Osborne's dislike to Hamley and to the monotony of his father's society.

"It was a mistake," thought the squire. "I see it now. I was never great at making friends myself: I always thought those Oxford and Cambridge men turned up their noses at me for a country booby, and I'd get the start and have none o' them. But when the boys went to Rugby and

Cambridge, I should ha' let them have had their own friends about 'em, even though they might ha' looked down on me; it was the worst they could ha' done to me, and now what few friends I had have fallen off from me, by death or somehow, and it is but dreary work for a young man, I grant it. But he might try not to show it so plain to me as he does. I'm getting case-hardened, but it does cut me to the quick sometimes—it does. And he so fond of his dad as he was once! If I can but get the land drained I'll make him an allowance, and let him go to London, or where he likes. Maybe he'll do better this time, or maybe he'll go to the dogs altogether; but perhaps it will make him think a bit kindly of the old father at home—I should like him to do that, I should!"

It is possible that Osborne might have been induced to tell his father of his marriage during their long tête-à-tête intercourse, if the squire, in an unlucky moment, had not given him his confidence about Roger's engagement with Cynthia. It was on one wet Sunday afternoon, when the father and son were sitting together in the large empty drawing-room. Osborne had not been to church in the morning; the squire had, and he was now trying hard to read one of Blair's sermons. They had dined early; they always did on Sundays; and either that, or the sermon, or the hopeless wetness of the day, made the afternoon seem interminably long to the squire. He had certain unwritten rules for the regulation of his conduct on Sundays. Cold meat, sermon-reading, no smoking till after evening prayers, as little thought as possible as to the state of the land and the condition of the crops, and as much respectable sitting indoors in his best clothes as was consistent with going to church twice a day, and saying the responses louder than the clerk. To-day it had rained so unceasingly that he had remitted the afternoon church; but oh, even with the luxury of a nap, how long it seemed before he saw the Hall servants trudging homewards, along the field-path, a covey of umbrellas! He had been standing at the window for the last half-hour, his hands in his pockets, and his mouth often contracting itself into the traditional sin of a whistle, but as often checked into sudden gravity—ending, nine times out of ten, in a yawn. He looked askance at Osborne, who was sitting near the fire absorbed in a book. The poor squire was something like the little boy in the child's story, who asks all sorts of birds and beasts to come and play with him; and, in every case, receives the sober answer, that they are too busy to have leisure for trivial amusements. The father wanted the son to put down his book, and talk to him: it was so wet, so dull, and a little conversation would so wile away the time! But Osborne, with his back to the window where his father was standing, saw nothing of all this, and went on reading. He had assented to his father's remark that it was a very wet afternoon, but had not carried on the subject into all the varieties of truisms of which it was susceptible. Something more rousing must be started, and this the squire felt. The recollection of the affair between Roger and Cynthia came into his head, and, without giving it a moment's consideration, he began,—

"Osborne! Do you know anything about this—this attachment of Roger's?"

Quite successful. Osborne laid down his book in a moment, and turned round to his father.

"Roger! an attachment! No! I never heard of it—I can hardly believe it—that is to say, I suppose it is to——"

And then he stopped; for he thought he had no right to betray his own conjecture that the object was Cynthia Kirkpatrick.

"Yes. He is though. Can you guess who to? Nobody that I particularly like—not a connection to my mind—yet she's a very pretty girl; and I suppose I was to blame in the first instance."

"Is it ——?"

"It's no use beating about the bush. I've gone so far, I may as well tell you all. It's Miss Kirkpatrick, Gibson's stepdaughter. But it's not an engagement, mind you——"

"I'm very glad—I hope she likes Roger back again——"

"Like—it's only too good a connection for her not to like it: if Roger is of the same mind when he comes home, I'll be bound she'll be only too happy!"

"I wonder Roger never told me," said Osborne, a little hurt, now he began to consider himself.

"He never told me either," said the squire. "It was Gibson, who came here, and made a clean breast of it like a man of honour. I'd been saying to him, I could not have either of you two lads taking up with his lassies. I'll own it was you I was afraid of—it's bad enough with Roger, and maybe will come to nothing after all; but if it had been you, I'd ha' broken with Gibson and every mother's son of 'em, sooner than have let it go on; and so I told Gibson."

"I beg your pardon for interrupting you, but, once for all, I claim the right of choosing my wife for myself, subject to no man's interference," said Osborne, hotly.

"Then you'll keep your wife with no man's interference, that's all; for ne'er a penny will you get from me, my lad, unless you marry to please me a little, as well as yourself a great deal. That's all I ask of you. I'm not particular as to beauty, or as to cleverness, and piano-playing, and that sort of thing; if Roger marries this girl, we shall have enough of that in the family. I should not much mind her being a bit older than you, but she must be well-born, and the more money she brings the better for the old place."

"I say again, father, I choose my wife for myself, and I don't admit any man's right of dictation."

"Well, well!" said the squire, getting a little angry in his turn. "If I'm not to be father in this matter, thou shalt be son. Go against me in what I've set my heart on, and you'll find there's the devil to pay, that's all. But don't let us get angry, it's Sunday afternoon for one thing, and it's a sin; and besides that, I've not finished my story."

For Osborne had taken up his book again, and under pretence of reading, was fuming to himself. He hardly put it away even at his father's request.

"As I was saying, Gibson said, when first we spoke about it, that there was nothing on foot between any of you four, and that if there was, he would let me know; so by-and-by he comes and tells me of this."

"Of what—I don't understand how far it has gone?"

There was a tone in Osborne's voice the squire did not quite like; and he began answering rather angrily.

"Of this to be sure—of what I'm telling you—of Roger going and making love to this girl, that day he left, after he had gone away from here, and was waiting for the 'Umpire' in Hollingsford. One would think you quite stupid at times, Osborne."

"I can only say that these details are quite new to me; you never mentioned them before, I assure you."

"Well; never mind whether I did or not. I'm sure I said Roger was attached to Miss Kirkpatrick, and be hanged to her; and you might have understood all the rest, as a matter of course."

"Possibly," said Osborne, politely. "May I ask if Miss Kirkpatrick, who appeared to me to be a very nice girl, responds to Roger's affection?"

"Fast enough, I'll be bound," said the squire, sulkily. "A Hamley of Hamley is not to be had every day. Now, I'll tell you what, Osborne, you're the only marriageable one left in the market, and I want to hoist the old family up again. Don't go against me in this; it really will break my heart if you do."

"Father, don't talk so," said Osborne. "I will do anything I can to oblige you, except——"

"Except the only thing I've set my heart on your doing."

"Well, well, let it alone for the present. There's no question of my marrying just at this moment. I'm out of health, and I'm not up to going into society, and meeting young ladies and all that sort of thing, even if I had an opening into fitting society."

"You should have an opening fast enough. There'll be more money coming in, in a year or two, please God. And as for your health, why, what's to make you well, if you cower over the fire all day, and shudder away from a good honest tankard as if it were poison?"

"So it is to me," said Osborne, languidly, playing with his book as if he wanted to end the conversation and take it up again. The squire saw the movements, and understood them.

"Well," said he, "I'll go and have a talk with Will about poor old Black Bess. It's Sunday work enough, asking after a dumb animal's aches and pains."

But after his father had left the room Osborne did not take up his book again. He laid it down on the table by him, leant back in his chair, and covered his eyes with his hand. He was in a state of health which

made him despondent about many things, though, least of all, about what was most in danger. The long concealment of his marriage from his father made the disclosure of it far far more difficult than it would have been at first. Unsupported by Roger, how could he explain it all to one so passionate as the squire? how tell of the temptation, the stolen marriage, the consequent happiness, and alas! the consequent suffering?—for Osborne had suffered, and did suffer, greatly in the untoward circumstances in which he had placed himself. He saw no way out of it all, excepting by the one strong stroke of which he felt himself incapable. So with a heavy heart he addressed himself to his book again. Everything seemed to come in his way, and he was not strong enough in character to overcome obstacles. The only overt step he took in consequence of what he had heard from his father, was to ride over to Hollingsford the first fine day after he had received the news, and go to see Cynthia and the Gibsons. He had not been there for a long time; bad weather and languor combined had prevented him. He found them full of preparations and discussions about Cynthia's visit to London; and she herself not at all in the sentimental mood proper to respond to his delicate intimations of how glad he was in his brother's joy. Indeed, it was so long after the time, that Cynthia scarcely perceived that to him the intelligence was recent, and that the first bloom of his emotions had not yet passed away. With her head a little on one side, she was contemplating the effect of a knot of ribbons, when he began, in a low whisper, and leaning forward towards her as he spoke,—“Cynthia—I may call you Cynthia now, mayn't I?—I am so glad of this news; I've only just heard of it, but I'm so glad!”

“What news do you mean?” She had her suspicions; but she was annoyed to think that from one person her secret was passing to another, and another, till, in fact, it was becoming no secret at all. Still, Cynthia could always conceal her annoyance when she chose. “Why are you to begin calling me Cynthia now?” she went on, smiling. “The terrible word has slipped out from between your lips before, do you know?”

This light way of taking his tender congratulation did not quite please Osborne, who was in a sentimental mood, and for a minute or so he remained silent. Then, having finished making her bow of ribbon, she turned to him, and continued, in a quick low voice, anxious to take advantage of a tête-à-tête between her mother and Molly,—

“I think I can guess why you made me that pretty little speech just now. But do you know you ought not to have been told? And, moreover, things are not quite arrived at the solemnity of—of—well—an engagement. He would not have it so. Now, I shan't say any more; and you must not. Pray remember you ought not to have known; it is my own secret, and I particularly wished it not to be spoken about; and I don't like it's being so talked about. Oh, the leaking of water through one small hole!”

And then she plunged into the tête-à-tête of the other two, making

the conversation general. Osborne was rather discomfited at the non-success of his congratulations ; he had pictured to himself the unbosoming of a love-sick girl, full of rapture, and glad of a sympathizing confidant. He little knew Cynthia's nature. The more she suspected that she was called upon for a display of emotion, the less would she show ; and her emotions were generally under the control of her will. He had made an effort to come and see her ; and now he leant back in his chair, weary and a little dispirited.

"You poor dear young man," said Mrs. Gibson, coming up to him with her soft, soothing manner ; "how tired you look ! Do take some of that eau-de-Cologne and bathe your forehead. This spring weather overcomes me too. 'Primavera' I think the Italians call it. But it is very trying for delicate constitutions, as much from its associations as from its variableness of temperature. It makes me sigh perpetually ; but then I am so sensitive. Dear Lady Cumnor always used to say I was like a thermometer. You've heard how ill she has been ?"

"No," said Osborne, not very much caring either.

"Oh, yes, she is better now ; but the anxiety about her has tried me so : detained here by what are, of course, my duties, but far away from all intelligence, and not knowing what the next post might bring."

"Where was she then ?" asked Osborne, becoming a little more sympathetic.

"At Spa. Such a distance off ! Three days' post ! Can't you conceive the trial ? Living with her as I did for years ; bound up in the family as I was."

"But Lady Harriet said, in her last letter, that they hoped that she would be stronger than she had been for years," said Molly, innocently.

"Yes—Lady Harriet—of course—every one who knows Lady Harriet knows that she is of too sanguine a temperament for her statements to be perfectly relied on. Altogether—strangers are often deluded by Lady Harriet—she has an off-hand manner which takes them in ; but she does not mean half she says."

"We will hope she does in this instance," said Cynthia, shortly. "They are in London now, and Lady Cumnor has not suffered from the journey."

"They say so," said Mrs. Gibson, shaking her head, and laying an emphasis on the word 'say.' "I am perhaps over-anxious, but I wish—I wish I could see and judge for myself. It would be the only way of calming my anxiety. I almost think I shall go up with you, Cynthia, for a day or two, just to see her with my own eyes. I don't quite like your travelling alone either. We will think about it, and you shall write to Mr. Kirkpatrick, and propose it, if we determine upon it. You can tell him of my anxiety ; and it will be only sharing your bed for a couple of nights."

CHAPTER XL.

MOLLY GIBSON BREATHES FREELY.

THAT was the way in which Mrs. Gibson first broached her intention of accompanying Cynthia up to London for a few days' visit. She had a trick of producing the first sketch of any new plan before an outsider to the family circle ; so that the first emotions of others, if they disapproved of her projects, had to be repressed, until the idea had become familiar to them. To Molly it seemed too charming a proposal ever to come to pass. She had never allowed herself to recognize the restraint she was under in her stepmother's presence ; but all at once she found it out when her heart danced at the idea of three whole days—for that it would be at the least—of perfect freedom of intercourse with her father ; of old times come back again ; of meals without perpetual fidgetiness after details of ceremony and correctness of attendance.

"We'll have bread and cheese for dinner, and eat it on our knees ; we'll make up for having had to eat sloppy puddings with a fork instead of a spoon all this time, by putting our knives in our mouths till we cut ourselves. Papa shall pour his tea into his saucer if he is in a hurry ; and if I'm thirsty, I'll take the slop-basin. And oh, if I could but get, buy, borrow, or steal any kind of an old horse ; my grey skirt is not new, but it will do ;—that would be too delightful. After all, I think I can be happy again ; for months and months it has seemed as if I had got too old even to feel pleasure, much less happiness again."

So thought Molly. Yet she blushed, as if with guilt, when Cynthia, reading her thought, said to her one day :—

"Molly, you are very glad to get rid of us, are not you ?"

"Not of you, Cynthia ; at least, I don't think I am. Ouly, if you only knew how I love papa, and how I used to see a great deal more of him than I ever do now——"

"Ah ! I often think what interlopers we must seem, and are in fact——"

"I don't feel you as such. You, at any rate, have been a new delight to me, a sister ; and I never knew how charming such a relationship could be."

"But mamma ?" said Cynthia, half-suspiciously, half-sorrowfully.

"She is papa's wife," said Molly, quietly. "I don't mean to say I am not often very sorry to feel I am no longer first with him ; but it was"—the violent colour flushed into her face till even her eyes burnt, and she suddenly found herself on the point of crying ; the weeping ash-tree, the misery, the slow dropping comfort, and the comforters came all so vividly before her—"it was Roger !"—she went on looking up at Cynthia, as she overcame her slight hesitation at mentioning his name—"Roger, who told me how I ought to take papa's marriage, when I was

first startled and grieved at the news. Oh, Cynthia, what a great thing it is to be loved by him !”

Cynthia blushed, and looked fluttered and pleased.

“Yes, I suppose it is. At the same time, Molly, I’m afraid he’ll expect me to be always as good as he fancies me now, and I shall have to walk on tip-toe all the rest of my life.”

“But you are good, Cynthia,” put in Molly.

“No, I’m not. You’re just as much mistaken as he is ; and some day I shall go down in your opinions with a run, just like the hall clock the other day when the spring broke.”

“I think he’ll love you just as much,” said Molly.

“Could you ? Would you be my friend if—if it turned out even that I had done very wrong things ? Would you remember how very difficult it has sometimes been to me to act rightly” (she took hold of Molly’s hand as she spoke). “We won’t speak of mamma, for your sake as much as mine or hers ; but you must see she is not one to help a girl with much good advice, or good—— Oh, Molly, you don’t know how I was neglected just at a time when I wanted friends most. Mamma does not know it ; it is not in her to know what I might have been if I had only fallen into wise, good hands. But I know it ; and what’s more,” continued she, suddenly ashamed of her unusual exhibition of feeling, “I try not to care, which I daresay is really the worst of all ; but I could worry myself to death if I once took to serious thinking.”

“I wish I could help you, or even understand you,” said Molly, after a moment or two of sad perplexity.

“You can help me,” said Cynthia, changing her manner abruptly. “I can trim bonnets, and make head-dresses ; but somehow my hands can’t fold up gowns and collars, like your deft little fingers. Please will you help me to pack ? That’s a real, tangible piece of kindness, and not sentimental consolation for sentimental distresses, which are, perhaps, imaginary after all.”

In general, it is the people who are left behind stationary, who give way to low spirits at any parting ; the travellers, however bitterly they may feel the separation, find something in the change of scene to soften regret in the very first hour of separation. But as Molly walked home with her father from seeing Mrs. Gibson and Cynthia off to London by the “Umpire” coach, she almost danced along the street.

“Now, papa !” said she, “I’m going to have you all to myself for a whole week. You must be very obedient.”

“Don’t be tyrannical, then. You are walking me out of breath, and we are cutting Mrs. Goodenough, in our hurry.”

“So they crossed over the street to speak to Mrs. Goodenough.

“We’ve just been seeing my wife and her daughter off to London. Mrs. Gibson has gone up for a week !”

“Deary, deary, to London, and only for a week ! Why, I can remember

its being a three days' journey! It will be very lonesome for you, Miss Molly, without your young companion!"

"Yes!" said Molly, suddenly feeling as if she ought to have taken this view of the case. "I shall miss Cynthia very much."

"And you, Mr. Gibson; why, it will be like being a widower once again! You must come and drink tea with me some evening. We must try and cheer you up a bit amongst us. Shall it be Tuesday?"

In spite of the sharp pinch which Molly gave to his arm, Mr. Gibson accepted the invitation, much to the gratification of the old lady.

"Papa, how could you go and waste one of our evenings. We have but six in all, and now but five; and I had so reckoned on our doing all sorts of things together."

"What sort of things?"

"Oh, I don't know: everything that is unrefined and ungenteel," added she, slyly looking up into her father's face.

His eyes twinkled, but the rest of his face was perfectly grave. "I'm not going to be corrupted. With toil and labour I have reached a very fair height of refinement. I won't be pulled down again."

"Yes, you will, papa. We'll have bread and cheese for lunch this very day. And you shall wear your slippers in the drawing-room every evening you'll stay quietly at home; and oh, papa, don't you think I could ride Nora Creena. I've been looking out the old grey skirt, and I think I could make myself tidy."

"Where is the side-saddle to come from?"

"To be sure the old one won't fit that great Irish mare. But I'm not particular, papa. I think I could manage somehow."

"Thank you. But I'm not quite going to return into barbarism. It may be a depraved taste, but I should like to see my daughter properly mounted."

"Think of riding together down the lanes—why, the dog-roses must be all out in flower, and the honeysuckles, and the hay—how I should like to see Merriman's farm again! Papa, do let me have one ride with you! Please do. I am sure we can manage it somehow."

And "somehow" it was managed. "Somehow" all Molly's wishes came to pass; there was only one little drawback to this week of holiday and happy intercourse with her father. Everybody would ask them out to tea. They were quite like bride and bridegroom; for the fact was, that the late dinners which Mrs. Gibson had introduced into her own house, were a great inconvenience in the calculations of the small tea-drinkings at Hollingsford. How ask people to tea at six, who dined at that hour? How, when they refused cake and sandwiches at half-past eight, how induce other people who were really hungry to commit a vulgarity before those calm and scornful eyes? So there had been a great lull of invitations for the Gibsons to Hollingsford tea-parties. Mrs. Gibson, whose object was to squeeze herself into "county society," had taken this being left out of the smaller festivities with great equanimity; but Molly missed the kind

homeliness of the parties to which she had gone from time to time as long as she could remember; and though, as each three-cornered note was brought in, she grumbled a little over the loss of another charming tête-à-tête with her father, she really was glad to go again in the old way among old friends. Miss Browning and Miss Phoebe were especially compassionate towards her in her loneliness. If they had had their will she would have dined there every day; and she had to call upon them very frequently in order to prevent their being hurt at her declining the dinners. Mrs Gibson wrote twice during her week's absence to her husband. That piece of news was quite satisfactory to the Miss Brownings, who had of late months held themselves a great deal aloof from a house where they chose to suppose that their presence was not wanted. In their winter evenings they had often talked over Mr. Gibson's household, and having little besides conjectures to go upon, they found the subject interminable, as they could vary the possibilities every day. One of their wonders was how Mr. and Mrs. Gibson really got on together; another was whether Mrs. Gibson was extravagant or not. Now two letters during the week of her absence showed what was in those days considered a very proper amount of conjugal affection. Yet not too much—at elevenpence halfpenny postage. A third letter would have been extravagant. Sister looked to sister with an approving nod as Molly named the second letter, which arrived in Hollingsford the very day before Mrs. Gibson was to return. They had settled between themselves that two letters would show the right amount of good feeling and proper understanding in the Gibson family: more would have been extravagant; only one would have been a mere matter of duty. There had been rather a question between Miss Browning and Miss Phoebe as to which person the second letter (supposing it came) was to be addressed. It would be very conjugal to write twice to Mr. Gibson; and yet it would be very pretty if Molly came in for her share.

"You've had another letter, you say, my dear," asked Miss Browning. "I daresay Mrs. Gibson has written to you this time?"

"It is a large sheet, and Cynthia has written on one half to me, and all the rest is to papa."

"A very nice arrangement, I'm sure. And what does Cynthia say? Is she enjoying herself?"

"Oh, yes, I think so. They have had a dinner-party, and one night when mamma was at Lady Cumnor's, Cynthia went to the play with her cousins."

"Upon my word! and all in one week? I do call that dissipation. Why, Thursday would be taken up with the journey, and Friday with resting, and Sunday is Sunday all the world over; and they must have written on Tuesday. Well! I hope Cynthia won't find Hollingsford dull, that's all, when she comes back."

"I don't think it's likely," said Miss Phoebe, with a little simper and a knowing look, which sat oddly on her kindly innocent face. "You see a great deal of Mr. Preston, don't you, Molly!"

"Mr. Preston!" said Molly, flushing up with surprise. "No! not much. He's been at Ashcombe all winter, you know! He has but just come back to settle here. What should make you think so!"

"Oh! a little bird told us," said Miss Browning. Molly knew that little bird from her childhood, and had always hated it, and longed to wring its neck. Why could not people speak out and say that they did not mean to give up the name of their informant? But it was a very favourite form of fiction with the Miss Brownings, and to Miss Phœbe it was the very acme of wit.

"The little bird was flying about one day in Heath Lane, and it saw Mr. Preston and a young lady—we won't say who—walking together in a very friendly manner, that is to say, he was on horseback; but the path is raised above the road, just where there is the little wooden bridge over the brook——"

"Perhaps Molly is in the secret, and we ought not to ask her about it," said Miss Phœbe, seeing Molly's extreme discomfiture and annoyance.

"It can be no great secret," said Miss Browning, dropping the little-bird formula, and assuming an air of dignified reproval at Miss Phœbe's interruption, "for Miss Hornblower says Mr. Preston owns to being engaged——"

"At any rate it is not to Cynthia, that I know positively," said Molly with some vehemence. "And pray put a stop to any such reports; you don't know what mischief they may do. I do so hate that kind of chatter!" It was not very respectful of Molly to speak in this way to be sure, but she thought only of Roger; and the distress any such reports might cause, should he ever hear of them (in the centre of Africa!) made her colour up scarlet with vexation.

"Heighy-teighy! Miss Molly! don't you remember that I am old enough to be your mother, and that it is not pretty behaviour to speak so to us—to me! 'Chatter' to be sure. Really, Molly——"

"I beg your pardon," said Molly, only half-penitent.

"I daresay you did not mean to speak so to sister," said Miss Phœbe, trying to make peace.

Molly did not answer all at once. She counted to explain how much mischief might be done by such reports.

"But don't you see," she went on, still flushed by vexation, "how bad it is to talk of such things in such a way? Supposing one of them cared for some one else, and that might happen, you know; Mr. Preston, for instance, may be engaged to some one else?"

"Molly! I pity the woman! Indeed I do. I have a very poor opinion of Mr. Preston," said Miss Browning, in a warning tone of voice; for a new idea had come into her head.

"Well, but the woman, or young lady, would not like to hear such reports about Mr. Preston."

"Perhaps not. But for all that, take my word for it, he's a great flirt, and young ladies had better not have much to do with him."

"I daresay it was all accident their meeting in Heath Lane," said Miss Phoebe.

"I know nothing about it," said Molly, "and I daresay I have been impertinent, only please don't talk about it any more. I have my reasons for asking you." She got up, for by the striking of the church clock she had just found out that it was later than she had thought, and she knew that her father would be at home by this time. She bent down and kissed Miss Browning's grave and passive face.

"How you are growing, Molly!" said Miss Phoebe, anxious to cover over her sister's displeasure. "As tall and as straight as a poplar-tree!" as the old song says.

"Grow in grace, Molly, as well as in good looks!" said Miss Browning, watching her out of the room. As soon as she was fairly gone, Miss Browning got up and shut the door quite securely, and then sitting down near her sister, she said, in a low voice, "Phoebe, it was Molly herself that was with Mr. Preston in Heath Lane that day when Mrs. Goodenough saw them together!"

"Gracious goodness me!" exclaimed Miss Phoebe, receiving it at once as gospel. "How do you know?"

"By putting two and two together. Did not you notice how red Molly went, and then pale, and how she said she knew for a fact that Mr. Preston and Cynthia Kirkpatrick were not engaged?"

"Perhaps not engaged; but Mrs. Goodenough saw them loitering together, all by their own two selves——"

"Mrs. Goodenough only crossed Heath Lane at the Shire Oak, as she was riding in her phaeton," said Miss Browning, sententiously. "We all know what a coward she is in a carriage, so that most likely she had only half her wits about her, and her eyes are none of the best when she is standing steady on the ground. Molly and Cynthia have got their new plaid shawls just alike, and they trim their bonnets alike, and Molly is grown as tall as Cynthia since Christmas. I was always afraid she'd be short and stumpy, but she's now as tall and slender as any one need be. I'll answer for it, Mrs. Goodenough saw Molly, and took her for Cynthia."

When Miss Browning "answered for it" Miss Phoebe gave up doubting. She sat some time in silence revolving her thoughts. Then she said:

"It would not be such a very bad match after all, sister." She spoke very meekly, awaiting her sister's sanction to her opinion.

"Phoebe, it would be a bad match for Mary Preston's daughter. If I had known what I know now we'd never have had him to tea last September."

"Why, what do you know?" asked Miss Phoebe.

"Miss Hornblower told me many things; some that I don't think you ought to hear, Phoebe. He was engaged to a very pretty Miss Gregson,

at Henwick, where he comes from ; and her father made inquiries, and heard so much that was bad about him, that he made his daughter break off the match, and she's dead since !”

“How shocking !” said Miss Phœbe, duly impressed.

“Besides, he plays at billiards and he bets at races, and some people do say he keeps race-horses.”

“But is not it strange that the earl keeps him on as his agent ?”

“No ! perhaps not. He's very clever about land, and very sharp in all law affairs ; and my lord is not bound to take notice— if indeed he knows—of the manner in which Mr. Preston talks when he has taken too much wine.”

“Taken too much wine. Oh, sister, is he a drunkard ? and we have had him to tea !”

“I did not say he was a drunkard, Phœbe,” said Miss Browning, pettishly. “A man may take too much wine occasionally, without being a drunkard. Don't let me hear you using such coarse words, Phœbe !”

Miss Phœbe was silent for a time after this rebuke.

Presently she said, “I do hope it was not Molly Gibson.”

“You may hope as much as you like, but I'm pretty sure it was. However, we'd better say nothing about it to Mrs. Goodenough ; she has got Cynthia into her head, and there let her rest. Time enough to set reports afloat about Molly when we know there's some truth in them. Mr. Preston might do for Cynthia, who's been brought up in France, though she has such pretty manners ; but it may have made her not particular. He must not, and he shall not, have Molly, if I go into church and forbid the banns myself ; but I'm afraid—I'm afraid there's something between her and him. We must keep on the look-out, Phœbe, I'll be her guardian angel, in spite of herself.”

Old Election Days in Ireland.

FOR a century and a half after Henry the Second accomplished the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland, one parliament, on this side of the Irish Sea, legislated for both kingdoms. An Irish difficulty effected a reform in this mode of government. The invasion of Ireland, by Bruce, at the close of the reign of Edward the Second, obtained for that country the right to legislate for its own affairs, but yet with a certain dependency on the parliament in England. That dependency was scarcely increased till the introduction of Poyning's law, in the reign of Henry the Seventh : a law which enacted that before an Irish parliament could assemble, it must first obtain the sanction of the King of England, and that previous to such sanction being asked, the applicants must state, in full detail, the measures they wished to propose, and the bills they desired to pass.

Till the thirty-third year of Henry the Eighth, no man could represent an Irish constituency, who was not English "by birth" or "by blood," the latter implying a person of English descent, but born in Ireland. The native maternal blood in these persons is said to have rendered them more Irish than the Irish themselves. From this period, the vote of a Roman Catholic could not be tendered ; but the complete subjection of the Irish to the English legislature was not established till the year 1719, when a law was passed which, allowing the Irish parliament to legislate independently, bound that body to recognize the legality of *all* acts passed by the English parliament. This, of course, destroyed the independence that was nominally allowed, for such a law authorized the English House to undo all that had been done by the Irish House, and compelled the latter to submit to the authority and its consequences.

In those old days, the duration of the Irish parliamentary existence depended on the good pleasure of the King, and the good behaviour of the representatives. It was not till 1768 that Dr. Lucas, a man of vast importance in his time, succeeded in carrying through a bill which enacted that the duration of an Irish parliament should not exceed eight years.

Fourteen years later came the greatest reform of all. England had made many concessions to Irish demands, but in 1782 there was a spirit abroad, and it was especially active in Ireland, which no concessions could altogether satisfy. The eager spirit of Irishmen led them to deny the supremacy of the English legislature over that of Ireland, and the right of the Irish Privy Council, under Poyning's Act, of the reign of Henry the Seventh, to originate laws for the Irish parliament to pass. The most formidable of those who made this denial were the hundred and forty-

three corps of armed Volunteers, who in convention, at Dungannon, had resolved upon redressing all "Irish grievances," and who registered a declaration to the effect that while they were "*disposed* to be loyal," they were "*determined* to be free." Grattan spoke to the same effect in the Irish House, whence an address was sent up to the throne, so very convincing in its phraseology, that the English parliament was led at once to repeal the obnoxious Act of George the First, which had made the Irish legislature subservient to that of Great Britain.

From that time till the year 1800, when the Act of Union was passed, Ireland possessed or enjoyed a parliament of its own. It is difficult to describe these dozen years of independence: according to some, they were years of purity and patriotism; if others be credited, they were years of nearly unmitigated baseness and corruption. To our thinking, there is some truth in both these reports.

It is a very singular fact that in the old election days in Ireland, a Protestant might lose his franchise by what the law called an ill-assorted marriage! A lover might ask and exclaim,—

From the heretic girl of my soul shall I fly,
To seek somewhere else a more orthodox kiss?
No! perish the hearts and the laws that try
Truth, valour, or love, by a standard like this!

A Protestant elector, however, who married a Roman Catholic lady, was bound to convert her, within a year, if he wished to preserve his vote. For example, at the election for Clonmel, county Tipperary, in 1761, the agent for one of the candidates tendered his vote; whereupon the opposing agent started up, and exclaiming, "You know you married a Papist!" disfranchised him at once; for this was not only the fact, but the husband had failed to bring over his wife to his own church within the time appointed by law. And then, the usual little formula followed. The disfranchised agent challenged his disfranchiser, and as in those days Irish gentlemen always carried their "reporters" or pistols with them, the two adversaries walked on to Clonmel Green, on the banks of the Suir, to settle their tempers. They were followed by an excited mob, whose entire sympathy was with the liberal and disfranchised agent. Pistol duels were, at that time, commonly fought on horseback, and our brace of agents, with a brace of pistols to each, were in saddle, moving their horses in narrow circles round each other, till opportunity presented itself for firing with effect. In those days, aim was taken, murder was meant, and the boast of "killing one's man" was made without apologetic paraphrase or hypocritical euphuism. The objecting agent was the first, on this occasion, to recognize opportunity; delivering his fire, he shot his antagonist through the heart, and the poor fellow rolled dead from the saddle on to the green. A scream of execration and a cry for vengeance went up from the exasperated mob, and there would soon have been another mutilated wretch upon the turf, had he not had

presence of mind again to recognize opportunity. He plunged, horse and rider, into the Stuir, and swimming to the opposite bank, escaped across the country. As for the poor fellow who had lost his vote and life because he had neglected to convert his wife, the killing him was doubtless illegal. Dead, the law would avenge him, but living, the law despised him. He was stigmatized as "a constructive Papist"—a more odious sort of "Papist" than one who was a Roman Catholic by birth, education, profession, and principle.

Twenty-two years later, that is, in 1783, General Walsh and Mr. Warburton were rival candidates for the representation of Queen's County. On this occasion the candidates did not come into deadly collision, but all Irish spirit was not so entirely dead as to allow the election to pass off without a *rencontre*. If the candidates could not quarrel or fight, there were not wanting electors ready and willing to do both. At an election drinking-bout in one of the taverns, a half-tipsy exciseman, who was *ex officio* disfranchised, was lamenting the lack of belligerent spirit in the people, when his eye fell on the open mouth of Jemmy Skelton, an elector, who was asleep at the opposite side of the table. Delighted at the opportunity, and grateful to the gods who sent it, the exciseman thrust his riding-whip down Skelton's throat. The uproar that ensued was perfectly delicious; so genuine a row had not awakened the echoes of Maryborough for many a long year. Everybody was excited and at his ease, except Jemmy Skelton, who was indeed as excited as everybody, but who was not so much at his ease, while the whip was still sticking in his throat. When something like calmness or a more concentrated rage was established, the usual arrangements for the *duello* were gone into, not altogether to the satisfaction of Skelton, who thought that a riding-whip in the gullet might have exempted him from a bullet in the thorax.

"No fear of you," said one of his seconds, as he clapped a brace of pistols into Jemmy's not too willing hands. "All you'll have to do, Jemmy," said the other, "is to lose no time. Only look alive, and you'll keep so!"

The exciseman and the chivalrous elector fought on the green at Maryborough, where tents were pitched, and a crowd with divided sympathies was assembled, and whisky was circulated in tin cups, and everything looked as cheerful and comfortable as Irish electors of the year 1783 could reasonably desire. They certainly found more fun than they at least expected, for Skelton's promptitude took them by surprise. With both pistols held before him, he went up at the "double quick" to the exciseman, and before any word or sign was given, he "blazed away," according to the instructions of his seconds, and, bringing down the exciseman by a shot in the leg, fired the other pistol full at him as he lay on the ground.

"Oh, you sanguinary villain," exclaimed the exciseman, as he lay on the grass, unhurt, however, by the second shot. "Do you want to take my life?"

"I do," said the candid Jemmy. "I've come here on purpose." But seeing that the exciseman was about to fire in *his* turn, Skelton having done all that opportunity offered, and being extremely careful of his own person, dropped his pistols and bolted from the ground with the utmost precipitation. The assembled multitude laughed so loud that they could not hoot him, and Jemmy ran too fast to allow them a chance of bringing him back to place him under fire.

These encounters alternated from grave to gay. One of the saddest occurred in the year 1808, in connection with the polling at Wexford. It has not been noticed by Sheridan's biographers that he was a candidate for Wexford in that year. He was, however, only nominally so; his name was put up, but he did not attend, nor did his friends exert themselves. All the polling lay between Colclough and Alcock. At the hustings, many electors who had promised their votes to the latter, treacherously tendered them to the former. Alcock called on his friend, yet opponent, to reject these votes; but Colclough, anxious, of course, to be at the head of the poll, accepted them with alacrity, and thanked the rascals with much satirical gratitude. This so exasperated Alcock that he sent a challenge to his adversary, which was couched in such terms that Colclough, according to the ideas of those days, could not possibly decline it. The men were not only friends, but their families were united in bonds of friendship too. Two of the members of those families were, if we mistake not, united in more tender bonds than those of friendship, or this electioneering drama would not have terminated so fatally. The two friends, accompanied as was the custom by troops of those who called themselves their friends, met near the quaint and ancient-looking city. They were as courteous to each other as if offence had neither been given, taken, or understood. There was no malice between them; but what was then called "honour" had been wounded, and when such damage had been done it was always repaired by murder, or an attempt at it. The two friends fired, Colclough clapped his hand to his side, fell back dead, and "honour" was satisfied. The conclusion pronounced by some of the spectators, of "there's an end to that matter," was, however, not the true one. Alcock, unharmed in body, had received such a mental shock at seeing his friend lying stark dead on the turf, that he was more to be pitied than the poor fellow he had so swiftly and suddenly slain. Assuredly, his condition was worse than that of the dead man; for he speedily sank into an imbecility from which he never recovered. Nor did the consequences end there. Alcock's sister, after mourning the condition of such a brother, might have met the world and its sunlight again, when the shadow of her great sorrow had passed away; but the fact that such a dear brother had shot her dearest friend, eclipsed the world and sunlight altogether, and the lady's mind unhappily perished long before the natural death of her body.

Some one has said that a state of war is the natural state of man; and in Ireland, at least, even infants were brought up on such a principle, as

late as the beginning of the present century. When Sir John Bourke and Amby Bodkin had a fierce quarrel, arising partly out of an electioneering discussion, they met armed for the *duello* on the lawn in front of the baronet's house, near Glinak. Neighbours were there, and tenants were there, and strangers who had heard of what was likely to be to the fore, were there also. All the household work was suspended, for all the servants had gathered together at a corner of the house, to see the master blaze away, and blow out Amby Bodkin's brains. The very nursery yielded its representatives. The house-steward had hastened thither just before the duel commenced, and taking Bourke's delighted little son by the hand, ran with him down to the lawn, where the too zealous steward hoisted him on to his shoulder, that he might "see papa fight!" It was a rare sight, and the boy crowed and clapped his hands from his elevation above the heads of the people. Not only the principals, but the seconds took part in the bloody fray. Each principal and his two friends delivered their fire simultaneously. As the smoke blew away Amby Bodkin and a second on either side were seen stretched on the ground, with holes in their carcases, and some angry blood flowing therefrom. But Sir John was erect, unscathed, and hilarious. The wounded were attended to, the spectators dispersed, and the baronet and his more immediate friends went into the house for luncheon and claret; and the little boy who was with them, and had holiday for the remainder of the day, was enabled to gather from their discourse, what a merry and honourable thing it was to mutilate two or three gentlemen on a lawn, on a fine spring morning.

Probably, the most remarkable example of Irish electioneering peculiarities is to be found in the story of the contest for Castlebar, county Mayo,—a contest which excited much antagonistic feeling some half century ago, and which is well remembered and briskly talked of in the locality even now. It is as frequently referred to as the famous "Castlebar Races," a name given to the strategic movement of the French under General Humbert, when the Marquis of Ormonde appeared in sight of the town with the express purpose of accelerating their movements.

For this pleasant little town, a candidate offered himself in the person of a well-esteemed gentleman of the neighbourhood, named Brown. His success seemed certain, for there was no opposition; but Brown had a friend, and an Irish friend being always disposed to render things lively and pleasant, the one in question (his name was Bingham) offered himself to the electors, as the opponent of Brown. This was looked upon as an exceedingly lively move, all the more so as Bingham's prospects became at once brighter than Brown's, and mischief was likely to be one of the much-coveted consequences.

Brown, indeed, looked serious; but mutual and vivacious friends resolved that matters should be made agreeable to gentlemen and custom, and they accordingly intimated to Brown that, if he would succeed, he must do the proper thing, namely, call Bingham out, and shoot him dead upon the spot. Now Brown had some foolish little scruples, and if he had

listened to them, and weakly yielded to considerations of humanity, morality, and the sixth commandment, the whole fun of an election would have been damaged altogether. Brown and Bingham were intimate friends; Bingham had a perfect right to contest Castlebar with Brown; the two things considered, Brown saw that he would be perfectly justified in calling Bingham out and shooting him if he could.

Both were pleasant fellows, as well as hearty friends, and it was as difficult a matter for Brown to pick a quarrel and fasten it upon a man, as it was for Bingham to take offence, when none was intended. Yet the thing must be accomplished, or dull indeed would be the election time in the good town of Castlebar. Brown meditated and hesitated, but he was told that, like Macbeth's little affair, it not only must be done, but it could be done well only by being done quickly. Brown did not lack courage; what he wanted was an excuse: but an Irishman's invention is a marvellous machine, and Brown's was in full and efficient play, as he sauntered into the Castlebar club-room and saw Bingham writing a letter, at a table adjacent to a window which looked into a field, or garden. Brown walked slowly up to the writer, who was quite unconscious of his adversary's approach, and leaning over him, said very distinctly and unpleasantly:—

“Bingham; you lie!”

Bingham looked up with mingled astonishment and fierceness, and then, addressing the members of the club (who were scattered about the room), as if he could scarcely believe his own ears,—

“My G—d, gentlemen! did you hear that? And I that never spoke to him!”

“Never mind, Bingham,” said Brown. “If you didn't speak a lie, you were thinking one!”

Bingham was a sensible man, quite amenable to reason, and he recognised the propriety and tendency of things at once. A man could not fight unless offence was given, and another could not fight unless the offence was taken. Brown had been clever enough to give it; Bingham was reasonable enough to take it. The logical sequence was that a duel was inevitable, and that all Castlebar would be delighted to witness it.

When pistols had been procured—and they, as a matter of course, at an election time, of all others, were “handy” or “convenient,”—the rival candidates descended to the field or garden behind the house, where the delighted members and as many of the townsfolk as had heard of what was to take place, were assembled. All the usual formalities having been gone through with the usual ceremonious politeness, the two friends, each bent on shooting the other, were placed at a distance of twenty paces, with liberty to advance on each other, and to fire when either thought that time, opportunity, and the devil, who presides at this sort of murder, were likely to be in his favour.

The adversaries stood motionless for a moment at the extreme distance, after the word was given to close; then they moved slowly, each keeping

his eyes fixed on those of his antagonist, but neither of them taking aim, for by this time to take aim in a duel was deliberately to commit or at least to intend murder. When half the intervening distance had been got over, Bingham, the more impatient combatant of the two, suddenly raised his arm, fired, and widely missed. He saw at once that he had lost the election. Brown, raising his pistol, exclaimed,—“Bingham, I'll shoot you!”

“Shoot and be d——d!” cried Bingham, in return, with all the expletive emphasis that was in fashion fifty years ago, from Carlton House to Connemara.

Brown was far from being such a fool as to follow the ill-meant counsel. With a sort of triumphant laugh, he raised his pistol in the air, and fired at what Mr. Carlyle calls “the Cathedral of Immensities.” He had won the election, and Mr Bingham was highly disgusted.

He had won the election; for, had Brown shot Bingham, he would probably have been compelled to retire from the hot though temporary pursuit of the law, and if Bingham survived the wound inflicted, he would necessarily come in by force of the sympathies of all the electors. But here was his friend and adversary, Brown, who had given him his life, and the law of chivalry would not allow of his opposing a man to whom he was indebted for such a boon. Bingham accordingly retired, and Brown was elected without opposition. The successful candidate was thoroughly convinced that there was no such process for getting rid of an opponent as calling him out, and *not* shooting him. But this conviction overlooked the circumstance that Bingham might *not* have missed when he fired at Brown. To obviate all possibility of failure in future, the former took to the practice of pistol-shooting at a mark, as the most important preparation for successfully obtaining the votes of an enlightened constituency.

Indeed, a knowledge of pistol-practice and everything connected therewith was not only necessary in order to get a man into the old Irish parliament, but also to keep him there. A candidate was never sure of getting through a canvass without being challenged to the field. He was a lucky man if he lived through the polling days without being, at least, disabled. If he gained the election, the losing opponent was pretty sure to shape things so as to have a shot at and with him, and thereby have at least the chance of creating a vacancy. If he was the loser in the contest, he had the same end in view; and, in short, few men gained access to the Irish House, save by the ordeal of fire. The access being gained, it was sometimes difficult to keep a footing there without the exercise of the utmost discretion. No senators made such vociferous claim for freedom of debate as the Irish members; but they had the greatest disgust for freedom of comment. The simplest remark uttered while a member was speaking, was at the extreme peril of the commentator. There was not a parliamentary orator in the Irish House, who claimed so much liberty of assertion on his own part, and resented freedom of argument on the part

of those who replied to him, as Hely Hutchinson. On one occasion, he was making the house in College Green ring with the echoes of his voice, most of the members deaf with the thunder of his vociferation, and some few listeners aghast at the fierceness of his spirit, and the marvellous irrationality of his logic. Dr. Lucas availed himself of a moment when Hely paused to draw breath, and he then said quietly, and without any distinct intention of being heard by Hutchinson, or any other person:—"Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!" Had he shrieked, "Houl' yer tongue, ye blaggard!" Hely could not have been more exasperated. Hely's friends, of course, took his view of the offence—they would have taken any view that was to lead to a "meeting" in the Phoenix Park;—and Dr. Lucas would have lost his social position if he had not accepted the challenge which ensued. The respectively foolish parties met, accordingly, but the affair was not very lively, inasmuch as it was not deadly and exciting, for the parties left the field as they entered it, and all parties, the spectators included, seemed to think they had had their morning's trouble for nothing.

Hely Hutchinson, in or out of parliament, was one of the most provoking of human beings. At the hustings, or in the senate, he was equally a terror to peaceful people, and his sons so nearly resembled their sire that, at one Irish election time, he and these three sons were, on the same day, engaged in duels! On another occasion, Hutchinson challenged the old Attorney-General Tisdale, but Tisdale declined:—"If I should kill you," said the aged lawyer, "I should get nothing but the pleasure of killing you; whereas, if you kill me, you will get my place of Secretary of State, of which you have the reversion." Hely's rapacity was notorious; and this provost of Dublin is said, in a political crisis, to have squeezed from Lord Townshend a majorship of dragoons, the duties of which were performed by a deputy! Lord North took correct measure of this famous Irish M.P., and before introducing him to George the Third, told the King, in words that have never been forgotten:—"Mr. Hutchinson is a man on whom if your Majesty was pleased to bestow the United Kingdom, he would ask the Isle of Man as a potato-garden."

Nothing could well be more off-hand as well as more high-handed than the way in which some of the Irish elections were carried on in the last century. In 1790, there was an election at Ballymakill. The borough had been a corrupt and enslaved pocket-borough time out of mind. The candidates were Sir Jonah Barrington and the Marquis of Drogheda. The latter, disregarding the electors, made sure of the returning-officer. This worthy person's name was French, and he was so well manipulated by his lordship, that he very speedily made things comfortable for his employer. He received six votes for his lordship, disallowed all those that were tendered for Barrington, and at the end of an hour or two, declared that the Marquis of Drogheda had been duly elected by a majority of the electors of the enlightened borough of Ballymakill.

The Earl of Aldborough acted even more imprudently than the

Marquis of Drogheda. Two brothers presented themselves for the honour of representing the constituents of Baltinglas. Before the election for a member, it was necessary that a returning-officer should be elected by the proper corporate authorities. Lord Aldborough put up his sister, Lady Harriet Stratford, for that office. Although the lady obtained only a minority of votes, that corporate minority pronounced her to have been legally chosen, and she was installed at the hustings. The flouted majority set up *their* officer and candidates in another part of the borough. Each officer made a return of the due election,—Lady Harriet, of Lord Aldborough's two friends, and the male returning-officer, of the two brothers. Baltinglas had never seen such a "row" as the one that ensued. There was not a head left whole in the borough that night, the heads of the whisky-barrels included. But might did not succeed in lording it over right. When the double return came before the House, that of the Aldborough White-Sergeant and her faction was declared to be illegal, and the two brothers took their seats, to the confusion of the Earl and Lady Harriet.

Previous to the time when the question of Catholic Emancipation was to be finally discussed and decided, the Irish landlords depended, without hesitation, on their forty-shilling freeholders. It did not enter into the imagination of the former that such freeholders would ever dare to vote in opposition to their landlords; and, during a very long period, it as little entered into the conceptions of the freeholders that they should risk "eviction,"—which was the one word for destruction and death,—by audaciously voting contrary to the will of the lords of the land.

At the election in 1826, when *Emancipation* was the popular electoral cry, and *Protestant Ascendancy*, the wish, if not the battle-shout, of the owners of estates, the ties between the latter and their tenants became suddenly loosed. There was an open and universal rebellion of the forty-shilling bondsmen, and their conduct drove some of their masters well-nigh mad. Up near Curraghmore, lay the old Marquis of Waterford, in a dying state, but easy in his mind touching one circumstance, the return of his brother, Lord George Beresford, for the borough of Curraghmore. The Marquis had returned his brother, again and again, without opposition. Indeed, had he been opposed, the freeholders would not have dreamed of supporting his adversary; and for such adversary to put in an appearance in the election time of 1826 was reckoned among things impossible. Lord George, himself, was popular, and the sole objection that his constituents could ever make against him,—and *that*, confidentially, to each other,—was that he was a staunch Protestant and invariably voted against the "Catholics." But that objection was the one peg on which the whole forty-shilling-freehold revolutionary movement depended; and to give practical force and application to it, an opponent to Lord George Beresford appeared in the very unwelcome person of Mr. Villiers Stewart.

Lord George could scarcely believe his senses; and the Marquis turned painfully in his bed, moved more by disgust at the audacity,

that by disquietude for the possible results. The forty-shilling freeholders had always followed their landlords, and would do so now. Lord George ceased to wonder, and the Marquis gradually fretted himself into a quiescent state of sulky confidence.

But it soon became apparent that not only every qualified tenant on his estate, but even all of his own servants who had the right of voting, would exercise their privilege against their lord and master. One by one,—canvassed by Lord George, or interrogated by the Marquis as he lay, feeble and querulous, on his bed,—one by one intimated that his vote would be given rather according to the bidding of the priest than according to that of the lord of the demesne. The Marquis was in sore dejection and misery, at the prospect of the downfall of his influence, when his eye fell, one day, on the person of his old huntsman, Manton. This much-honoured official had no leisure to trouble himself about politics or church service. If Heaven had made him a huntsman, it was his bounden duty to look after hounds and kennel, horses and stable, the beer-cellar and himself. He had a voice that rendered the wood-echoes musical, the pack jubilant, and Reynard panic-stricken. Old Manton had no will of his own; his will was his lord's, just as his forty-shilling freehold was. The Marquis had no doubt of this fact, as he saw the old huntsman standing at the threshold of the sick lord's chamber; and he bade his servant enter.

Manton obeyed, but not with such alacrity as usual, and as he thrust the handle of his riding-whip into his mouth, and looked sheepish and embarrassed, the Marquis almost distrusted the most faithful of his followers.

"Manton," said he, feebly, "you will not serve me as the rest are doing? You will vote for Lord George?"

"Well, my lord," answered Manton, with increasing embarrassment of manner, "you see—long life to your lordship!"

"Long life!" murmured the infirm peer, "alas!"

"You'll do well yet, my lord," said Manton; but as the Marquis pressed the all-important question, the huntsman grew more decided but not less respectful, and, without giving weight to the reflection that he was perilling both his place and freehold tenure, he exclaimed: "God bless you, my lord, whatever way things go! I'd go to the world's end to serve you in any other way but this; but you see, my lord, there's one thing I can't do at all. I can't vote against the old country and the old religion."

Local tradition says that this speech caused the old lord to burst into tears. His very henchman, as it were, had resolved to be treacherous. The humiliated peer was pierced to the heart, at the thought of how low the once powerful Beresfords had fallen, and of how little comparative importance they were in the eyes of their own dependants. The wounded pride would have been soled, had Lord George triumphed, but such balm was not vouchsafed to the Marquis. Villiers Stewart was returned,

the defeat of the Beresfords was complete. Their influence, their *prestige*, was destroyed for ever, and the sick old peer took up his bed and walked. Ill as he was, he abandoned Curraghmore, and never again returned to the place where his rule had once been so unquestioned, but where it had now perished for ever.

The revolt of the forty-shilling freeholders is fully illustrated in this single incident; but it was universal; wherever it was necessary, they went against their landlords. By such action they carried Catholic emancipation; and political gratitude was never so unpleasantly exemplified as in the fact that the candidates who were returned by their votes, acquiesced, in 1829, in the proposal to deprive them of their franchise. Such deprivation had become, perhaps, a political necessity. The freeholders were like the insect which, having delivered its sting, straightway expires.

Some of the few worthy members of the old Irish parliament were not exempt from political inconsistency. Curran himself, a great stickler for purity, affords us an example. He first entered the House of Commons in Dublin as the nominee of Mr. Longfield, who was subsequently Lord Longueville. Curran sat for Kilbeggan, but he stipulated that his action should be entirely unshackled, and that the patron of the borough should not presume to influence his vote. Mr. Longfield, looking upon the stipulation as a formality for the ease of Curran's conscience, consented. A time came, however, when the nominee's vote highly displeased the patron, and a quarrel ensued. Curran could not resign his seat, for Irish members had not then the opportunity which the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds affords to legislators desirous of withdrawing from the responsibility of making laws. The honourable member for Kilbeggan, nevertheless, had a remedy for the difficulty. The independent Irish patriot offered to purchase a borough and a representative for it who should never vote but in accordance with Mr. Longfield's directions!

The candidates for seats in the parliament which had to pronounce on the question of the Union, were bound by strict pledges to their respective constituencies to vote for the country, whatever measure might be proposed. When these candidates became members, no one produced such mingled feelings of scorn and merriment as an obscure representative who offered to vote for the Union, on terms which he had put down in writing. The Government agreed to the terms, but refused to sign any written agreement. The member suspecting that this circumstance indicated treachery, made a violent speech *against* the Union. The last words were on his lips, when a treasury messenger placed in his hands the agreement he had required, duly signed and sealed. He glanced at it, concluded his adverse speech in the spirit in which he had begun it, and a few minutes after voted *for* the Union! As many people laughed at as cried against this proceeding, which served Ireland better than it pleased Irishmen. But the vote, if we mistake not, obtained a peerage for him who gave it. The Government rewarded deeds and disregarded words.

How deeply the constituencies of the sister island felt and resented the conduct of such of their representatives as voted for the union of the kingdoms, may be traced in the legends and feelings which still linger in country localities. The bitterness of feeling, indeed, has lingered in other breasts than those of the common and easily-exasperated people. Grattan's son, himself a candidate for election, and some time a member of Parliament, was not ashamed, in his father's biography, to tickle the ears of Irish electors, by adding this awful passage to the literature of assassination:—"If two or three courtiers," he says, "had been killed, the Union might have been prevented. . . . However, these were not the olden times, as in Rome, when a patriot drew his sword and killed a magistrate; then, brandishing it, appealed to the people that he had slain a traitor. Unquestionably, Lord Clare and Lord Castlereagh deserved to die. . . . Some weak old woman might have called 'murder!' but it would have been the deed of a Brutus."

Here was a "*sic semper tyrannis!*" uttered to catch votes; but it hardly fell in with the spirit of electors. Of the old spirit of violence and of fun there is not much left; there perhaps survives more of the old spirit of the former than of the latter. Indeed, a spirit of real, downright fun never existed at all in Ireland. It is one of the patent mistakes of dramatists and novel-writers to exhibit the Irish Kelt as a *jolly* fellow. His nature is nearly the reverse; he is alternately fierce and desponding, and exceptionally madly gay. It is only in remote districts that a violent spirit still prevails, in a few landlords as well as in a few tenants. We have heard of one lord who, just before the recent election, threatened every tenant, who should fail to vote as his landlord would have him, with eviction. Such a threat may bring the utterer under a sentence of death, issued from a "Ribbon lodge;" and such a sentence is as sure to be carried out as doom itself. But this landlord is a dauntless and foreseeing man, and he is said to have made a will, whereby the legatee is directed, under certain penalties, and in case of the legator's death by violence, to evict every tenant from the estate who has voted against the landlord's directions and interests.

We may point to the riots at Nottingham at the end of June in the present year by way of proof that there is as much violence and as little fun in electioneering riots in England as there have ever been in Ireland. In the latter country the excessive interest which was once felt by a certain class of electors in the triumph of a particular candidate has ceased, and that for a particular reason. Although competitive examinations have neither crushed intrigues nor suppressed jobbery, they have been a great boon to Irish Members. Nearly every Irish elector used to pester the successful candidate for whom he had voted, for a place for his son, or some more distant kinsman. It is impossible to conceive the annoyance to which Irish Members were formerly exposed in this respect, and the downright lying to which it compelled them. To all similar applications now, they can put forth the simple truth, that no places are, in these days, acquired except by those competitive examinations.

For the last half century, another social improvement has been much to the benefit of candidates. No aspirant to legislative honours goes to the poll with the possibility of having to fight a duel, or wins an election with the almost certainty of having to stand fire. Duelling, as the resource of honourable men, received its first shock in Ireland in the year 1788, when Robert Keen met Nugent Reynolds and shot him dead as Reynolds was courteously raising his hat to him, before the time for firing. When Reynolds's second, Plunket, cried out against such "murder," Keen's second, his brother Henry, fired at him, with the remark, "If you don't like it, take that!" Robert Keen was very properly hanged for this cowardly assassination. Duelling, thenceforth, took so much the guise of murder that some honourable men who did not decline to go out, either fired in the air, or refused to fire at all, after receiving the shot of their adversary. In 1790, Hobart, the secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, on being called upon to return Curran's fire, simply asked if Mr. Curran was satisfied: "I regret," said the latter, that you have taken this advantage; but you have made it impossible for me not to be satisfied."

Several years later, in 1815, the humane Major Hillas was challenged by one of the old class of "ruffianly gentlemen." The quarrel may have been aggravated by political antipathies, but its immediate cause arose out of a dissension touching a question of wreck and salvage. The major went to the ground in a full suit of mourning, and he was brave man enough to say to the assembled crowd:—"I am sorry that the mistaken laws of honour oblige me to come here and defend myself; and I declare to God I have no animosity to man or woman on the face of the earth." They cast lots for "first fire," and the devil, who is ever busy in these matters, gave it to Fenton. The same devil pointed Fenton's pistol, and Major Hillas was carried from the field a corpse. A year later, the great duellist Dillon, who in most of his "affairs" had had Ben Kane for his "friend," had the latter in front of him as principal, instead of at his side as second, and Dillon fell dead, nearly on the spot where his father, an accomplished duellist, had fallen dead before him. The immediate causes of many duels in Ireland were only the consequences of political antagonisms which had raged more or less violently at some previous election period. In those old election days in Ireland, there was nothing so common as loss of life—nothing so thoroughly enjoyed by the people as a public duel and much bloodshed. At the recent election, all people worthy of respect in the sister island were desirous that the contest of 1865 might pass over peaceably. How different this feeling is from that which prevailed in the last century, will best be shown by an extract from a private letter written at Newry in 1774:—"Our election," says the writer, "goes on with the greatest spirit. Last night a poor fellow was killed, and four or five persons are in confinement for the murder."

Etna in Eruption.

ONE almost airless day in May last the yacht D—— sailed, or rather drifted, round the point of Taormina. Through the long hours of a sweltering morning, we who were on board had counted the minutes till that point should be turned, and till the flank of Etna should be displayed far enough to reveal the source of a long flat bank of smoke which hung a couple of thousand feet or so below the summit. When we at last came within view, four or five dark curls lazily winding upwards from the pine-forest to the smoke-bank were alone visible, a mere multiplication of what may be seen well nigh every day rising from the crater of Vesuvius. The disappointment was grievous; and in our haste we said that the eruption of Etna either had never been, or at least was a thing of the past. But that evening, while we were lounging sadly in the cabin, a sound for the moment inexplicable called us upon deck. Imagination transformed it afterwards into a muffled explosion; yet at the time it was not until after we had heard it once or twice repeated that it could be distinguished clearly from the noise made by the boom, checked suddenly by the sheet, as it swayed backward and forward in unison with the long roll of the vessel. Presently, however, the sound grew louder, its iteration became more frequent, and then as though a crust were broken through by a mighty effort came a sharp burst, and from out of a glow which reddened all the mountain side stones shot into the air, darting upwards for hundreds of feet, sometimes in masses and sometimes in succession, but by their size and the brilliancy of their light always distinct each from the other, even at the long distance of fifteen miles from which we were looking. For hours, at intervals varying from a few minutes to half-an-hour at a time, these bursts, followed by the flashing bouquets of stones, jarred the stillness of the night; but gradually they became rarer and less violent; and by the morning Etna had sunk again into apparent rest, and again the row of smoke-curls alone suggested a possible activity. We had seen enough, however, to compel a visit to the eruption, and a few mornings later we set out, four in number, from Catania by the coast road for Piedimonte, the town whence the craters and the lava stream are most easily reached.

The neighbourhood of Catania is a strange mixture of pleasant verdure and of ghastliness. No soil is more fertile than that formed by disintegrated lava, and the vast sides of Etna are belted round by forests of oak and chestnut, by fields of corn, by vineyards and olive groves, and by gardens thick with orange-trees and lemons. Round Catania itself is perhaps the very richest district of the whole region; in most directions every inch of

ground is cultivated, and the strength of the crops and their freedom from weeds attest at once the kindliness of the soil and the thoroughness of the hand-labour which is spent upon it; while nature, forbidden to riot in the open spaces, covers in her exuberance the road-sides, the fragments of waste ground, and even the walls, with a mantle of many-coloured flowers, and contrives to nourish apricots and olives out of the same earth which produces flax and wheat. Suddenly after miles of this bewildering colour, oppressive to the eye in its brilliancy, the traveller will come upon a tract of ashes, into which he sinks ankle-deep, where the trees are sticks, and the thinness of the vegetation shows the newness of its existence; or, as can be seen within a mile of the city itself, he may find himself in a harsh waste of lava unsoftened by the wear of nearly six centuries, and still a mere stream of slag crawled over here and there by an atrophied prickly pear yellow for lack of nourishment; and sometimes even from among the densest masses of plants a carious pinnacle of lava, wooed in vain by convolvulus or by vine, will jut forth to take all brightness out of the landscape by its incapacity to receive either light or shadow on its leaden surface. But it is in the closely strewn villages that there is most of volcanic grimness. The houses are chiefly built of lava, and nothing can exceed in ghastliness the sombre effect of blue-black walls and blue-black pavement, except the effort which the churches and the houses of more pretension make to be cheerful by having their larger surfaces white-washed, and restraining the use of lava to the corners and to the edges of the windows. Somehow these churches and houses affect the mind much as do the skeletons which, arranged in gay dresses, grin in rows of glass cases along the walls of vaults under the Capuchin monasteries of Sicily. Fortunately, there is one road along which the towns and villages, from being built of a warm yellow tufa, avoid this dreariness of aspect; and it was this which, after crossing the still barren lava of 1881, we pursued along the coast and past Aci Reale towards the town nearest to the scene of eruption. The journey is long; and it was not till the evening that the apparition of our carriage drew all the women of Piedimonte to their windows, and attracted all the men in our wake till we stopped opposite the café and gossiping centre of the little town. Piedimonte is distant four miles of hill from the post-road, and though, strangely enough for Sicily, it can be reached itself by carriage, the carriage-road soon ceases beyond. It has no inn, however mean; and probably, until the eruption broke out, the only event in its history was the passage through it of a foreigner once in a generation. It is easy therefore to imagine how many hands grasped the handle of the carriage door, how many tongues screamed salutation, how many questions—or rather it is not easy to imagine the number of questions which poured in a continuous cataract into uncomprehending ears, and by what surging waves of men we were borne into the café. It is hard to guess what might have been our fate at the hands of those well-intentioned but somewhat lively Sicilians, had we not fortunately brought a letter to an

obliging inhabitant of the place, a certain Don Antonio Mafaraci, who with vast good nature has devoted himself to the calling of amateur lodging finder, horse hirer, and general expedition organizer for the strangers who have invaded Piedimonte in no small quantity during the winter and spring. He was in the café at the moment, and straightway, before I had half finished my self-introductory speech, seized me by both hands, wrung them violently, tucked my arm under his—a ceremony which, so far as my experience serves, a Sicilian always goes through when he intends to be particularly kind—and just by way of getting possession of me to his own sole behoof, for like every one else he was too excited by the coming of a batch of new strangers to talk at first, marched into the street, where he hurried up and down speechless, but tenderly nursing my arm. He soon recovered himself, and presently carried me off to see the place where we should remain for the hour or two which intervened between then and the time at which we ought to start. The street was at this time nearly blocked in front of the café, and as I went away I heard the same continuous questions waxing louder and louder in the vain attempts of the crowd to overcome the deafness which seemed to them the only intelligible reason for the silence of my friends. When we were fairly ensconced in our lodgings, things were little better. To wash was impossible; our clothes could only be surreptitiously changed; the doors were permanently occupied by reliefs of men; the women, with more boldness, filed uninterruptedly through the rooms, veiling their curiosity under proffers of service; and the children simply climbed upon the beds, and stayed there till our toilettes were finished, and the interest was transferred to the dinner-table. In short, four commonplace foreigners excited almost as much curiosity, in a town within sight of steamers, which pass well nigh every day, as is said to be displayed in nooks of the world where Europeans have never been seen before. All this might be amusing, but was inconvenient; still, the memory which will connect itself longest with the people of Piedimonte is that of their kindness, so honest, so active, and so frank—a kindness, by the way, that, whatever their fault in other respects, the country-folks of Southern Italy always keep ready for the stranger whom they have not been so unfortunate as to rob before they have had the opportunity of making his acquaintance.

The time of our rest affords a natural break, and I may be permitted therefore to use the opportunity in giving some notices of the topography of the eruption. Etna is, as every one knows, an isolated mountain, almost absolutely circular in plan, and of vast size. From its base, eighty-seven miles in circumference, its sides rise in a nearly regular slope to an undulating plateau of considerable extent, about a thousand feet below the top of the cone, which springs immediately from it. One exception there is to the even course of ascent, where the great trough of the Val del Bove, partly boring into the mountain and partly hewn out of its side, presents its more abrupt walls to the sea. Otherwise the contour is only varied by an infinity of minor cones, some insignificant, others claiming the dignity of

considerable hills, which are scattered all round in certain numbers, but which lie chiefly on the southern face. These mark the seats of successive eruptions—for the great cone itself, though always smoking, is rarely the source of any great lava current—and by their curious appearance, like limpets on a rock, as well as by the variety of their colour, sometimes strong red, sometimes ashen grey, sometimes green from abundant verdure, impart its distinctive character to the mountain. The most destructive lava floods have run from those which look in the direction of Catania, but the rearward face of the mountain, no doubt, from the comparative thinness of the walls of the crater towards the east, is that which has been most frequently ravaged, and the last eruption which threatened the southern slopes broke out above Nicolosi in 1780. Since then the centre of activity seems to have permanently shifted to the north-east, relieving itself generally through the Val del Bove, and now, in this last eruption, from craters situated on a sort of rudimentary ridge which follows a north-easterly line towards the sea from the north-eastern corner of the plateau. These craters are at an elevation of about six thousand feet—that is to say, close upon the upper limit of the pine-forests, and being on the crest of the ridge, can pour their lava to the east, or by a nearly northerly path, towards the towns of Linguagrossa and Piedimonte, which however the stream has never yet approached. It was on the night of the 30th January that the eruption began, after a series of warnings given at intervals since the month of July, 1863, by the opening of a fissure a mile and a half long, from which burst the contents of the choking mountain with extraordinary rapidity of movement. During the first six days the lava ploughed its way in an easterly direction, through the forest, at the rate of twenty feet in the minute, falling at one place over a rock in a cataract of liquid fire; and though after a while its pace diminished sensibly, it had yet traversed fully nine miles by the middle of February. Towards the end of March the lava had ceased to move, and the action of the craters, which now formed the centres of distinct cones, seemed to be suspended, when suddenly a fresh stream gushed forth with new violence, and ran due north towards Piedimonte. It was the latter stream which was still moving in May, and it was this accordingly that we visited. By reason of the quantity of lava which has been disgorged, no less than because of its duration, this eruption must be ranked among those of the severest class. Owing, however, to its position so high up on the mountain side, and to the distance which the lava had to travel before it could reach cultivated ground, it has as yet inflicted no damage commensurate with its seriousness, and probably will die out before any cultivated ground has been reached by the second current at any rate. Some, though not much, cultivation was destroyed by the original easterly river.

The existence of a natural curiosity has always a somewhat amusing effect upon the minds of the people in its neighbourhood. They begin by endowing it with mysterious and awful attributes. They elevate it to the position of a fetish; then, when they find that it can be approached with-

out death, when familiarity has even dissipated terror, instead of casting it from its throne, they assume rather that peculiar privileges attach to the fact of neighbourhood, that strangers can only venture near with safety after the performance of many rites, and even so only with circumspection and in the company of many privileged ones. But there is a method in this madness. Personal and local vanities are flattered, and a door is opened besides to the inflow of much solid gain. It would have been too much to expect the good folks of Piedimonte to have been the sole exception to so unvarying a rule. Nor were they. To each man were to be his guide and his horse, and to each guide his mule; men were to go with lanterns before, men were to follow with provisions after; men were to come before and after because it seemed good unto them. We were to start at ten o'clock at night. Strange penalties, the more terrible that they were entirely unexplained, were to be incurred if we set forth later, and equally strange risks were to be met if we did not bivouack for the last hours of darkness in the gloom of a pine-wood, where we were threatened notwithstanding with a couple of hours of intense cold. Between this complexity in the arrangements and the multitude of our followers, we fully understood, as we filed out of Piedimonte, that we were engaged upon an expedition of much seriousness; nor did the wild aspect of the party tend to weaken the idea. The narrow path by which we began to mount the hill-side lay in utter obscurity between the high walls which enclosed it on either hand; but the slanting moonlight, as it trickled through the trees, flecked here and there a horse's head, just revealed what seemed like great packs fastened to the saddles, and showed in high relief against the grey green light the forms of a long line of men, some in cloaks and lofty peaked hoods, others in jackets and sombreros, others again in low sailor-like hats, all alike picturesque and disreputable-looking; men who might have been well taken for a gang of smugglers, and the more so for the silence which pervaded the party and the guides, apparently from choice as between the latter, and as between them and ourselves because of the impossibility of understanding the Sicilian dialect.

The picturesqueness of the scene increased rather than diminished as we passed out of the cultivated tract into the oak and pine forests of the upper mountain; but our enjoyment decreased in inverse proportion to the call for its exercise. Among their many assumptions, our good friends had chosen to assume that Englishmen cannot ride; so as they only possessed one saddle in all the town, instead of putting under us rugs and sacks, they had laden the horses' backs with monstrous edifices of wood, used ordinarily for piling goods on, and then they had induced us, much protesting, to mount. They were frameworks covered with sacking, some two feet and a half across, square and flat-topped. Riding crosswise, there was no imaginable position in which the legs could be placed which relieved them from the pressure of ruthless edges, or which could save the thighs from being stretched sideways at right angles to the body, a gymnastic attitude apparently easy to clowns in a circus, but

emphatically disagreeable to men without special education. In daylight the natives avoid the difficulty by riding after the fashion of women; but at night in a pine-forest we found the results of imitating them too serious in practice, and resigned ourselves to necessity till the torture compelled one after another to drop off his horse and exchange misery for the comparative happiness of stumbling over tree-roots, floundering into streams, and falling prostrate over rocks. Generally we felt our way through utter gloom; but here and there, where the leafage was not too close to admit a few rays of light, glows of unnatural red penetrated sparingly; and once we looked down an open valley, to where at the end the trees stood out darkly against a flare of brilliant flame-colour, which rising from the lava-stream interposed itself between us and the lower sky. At length, at about two in the morning, we reached the most sombre spot of all the forest, where the ashen soil had drifted into hillocks, which had solidified through ages, and between which were narrow scoops densely roofed by pines, the bare trunks of which shot up unbranching for fifty or sixty feet. Here, in a nook sheltered from the wind, we halted till the first gleams of sunrise should enable us to clamber over the older lava, which had cooled by exposure during some months to the atmosphere. Groping by the dim light of lanterns, we collected materials for a fire, round which we all cast ourselves in a great circle, and soon for the most part sank in heavy sleep, spite of the weird beauty of the scene,—blackness that could be felt, except where the fitful light of the fire darted here and there amongst the huge trunks, and where through one small space above the stars shone from behind a lurid veil; in spite too of the loud thunders of the mountain, which now seemed to roll from immediately by us.

By half-past three the lurid tinge in the sky began to give place to a cooler light, and we at once put ourselves in movement. To have waited longer would have been to abandon the very object of our night journey—the sight of the craters before daylight should have dulled the full grandeur of their fires. During the few minutes which the dawn required to sink from the upper heavens to the earth about us, we clambered over beds of black snow, parted from each other by ridges of ash, till suddenly on cresting one of the latter a view broke upon us which, among the not few unusual views presented to me at different times by my good fortune, remains certainly one of the most marvellous. On one side the Mediterranean in perfect calm stretched out into infinity, except where the long silhouette of the Calabrian hills, by their sweeping outline rather adding to than taking from the repose of the sea and air, rose in misty grey against the pale citron of the cloudless sky. On the other, the snowy head of Etna, just visible over its massive shoulders, was touched already by the to us unrisen sun, and shone with transparent rose-colour, which was repeated more faintly on the steam floating gently upwards from its top. On either side the most exquisite repose; but in the centre, right before us, and not a quarter of a mile away, a hideous misshapen lump shut out half the sky, which

was darkened far above and around by rushing volumes of red smoke and by darting curls of steam. From the side of this cone, broken down at the part nearest to us, shot upwards volleys of stones and flame, which, from the speed with which it was projected, was simply a straight-edged sheet of flare. Between us and the crater lay a waste of fresh lava, still sending forth jets of steam and quivering gas from every pore, leaden in its colour, and fantastic in its shapes, as is molten lead when thrown into water. Partly this had flowed from the crater over against us, partly from two others, one then quiescent, the second more active than that which was nearest to us, and both some distance further towards the upper slopes of the mountain.

Far away to the left the united streams could be traced down a channel more than a mile in breadth, which they had cut through the forest, till turning a corner they precipitated themselves to a lower level in an ugly travesty of an ice-fall. The immediate foreground was occupied by the abrupt edge of the lava, bordered with burnt and half-burnt trees, some standing erect with every shred of foliage singed off them, some felled, cut round the bottom by the lava precisely as if by beavers. We sat long looking, but the first impression was the most vivid; and as the morning grew, the effect of the eruption itself diminished greatly. Wonderful in truth as the scene was to us, it must have been far more terrible to those who saw it earlier in the year. Then the spot where we stood in thorough safety was swept by frequent volleys; and if our guides spoke truth, stones were hurled seven hundred yards or more in perpendicular height. The violence of the discharge from the crater had been for some time lessening, and in addition it varied much from day to day, even from hour to hour. In the night when we had sailed past, the eruption had for a time equalled in intensity its first vigorous gush; but on the morning when we came to the spot it was perhaps almost at its lowest point; and though during the first few minutes of our stay some tremendous explosions took place, they soon declined, and grew milder and milder continuously till we left. There was however enough to let us see thoroughly how a volcano works, and imagination could easily make the noise more deafening, increase the volume of flame, enlarge the stones, and throw them somewhat higher and farther. The imagination, for that matter, could almost in some things exaggerate the burning of a great warehouse into the eruption of a volcano; the flame and the smoke are there, and at the moment when the roof falls in the perpendicular burst upwards might give a faint notion of the manner in which the fire shoots from the crater; and though there is no equivalent for the close column of stones which is thrown up in the latter case, the beams cast hither and thither might distantly suggest the stray blocks which, instead of falling again into the gulf, are hurled outside to distances sometimes small and sometimes great. But that for which in common fires there is no analogy, however remote, is the regularity with which the phenomena repeat themselves; a regularity

which suggests the idea that there is a great system of arteries within the earth, filled with running fire in place of blood, that one of the arteries has been eaten into by the progress of some horrid superficial tumour, and that with every pulsation of the great heart of the mountain its life spouts forth through the wound, as blood from the carotid artery of a man. A certain amount of fire, a certain number of stones, always issue from the crater; but once a minute sometimes, sometimes more often, a great gush leaps for several hundreds of feet into the air with hardly any warning to the eye, and sinks as suddenly again. It is then that the larger stones are disgorged, in the midst of a cloud of lesser ones which play up and down in the flame like the balls of which street acrobats keep five or six in the air at once. If, however, these gushes take place without much notice to the eye, they are preluded at least to the ear by a hoarse roar like that made when flame is borne along in a confined space by a fierce draught, except that it includes besides a noise which is indescribable, but which declares itself at once to be that of the stones as they grind against one another in their helpless rush to the surface. The same noise, but with nothing of volcanic vehemence, can be heard when the stones of a beach are dragged about by angry waves.

After a while we attempted to clamber over the lava in the direction of the craters, but little was to be gained by going nearer, and we found the walking so disagreeable that we soon returned. In some places a coating of ashes overlay the lava, and let the feet through into traps set with unpleasantly sharp corners. In others the surface was composed of loose fragments which had cracked off in cooling, or of crusts so thin that they gave way under the foot. To get on at all it was necessary to steady oneself with the hands, which were often scratched, and even cut, in simply taking hold of the projecting bits. But in abandoning the lava at this point we by no means limited our view of the eruption to the mere action of the crater; the most interesting part of the visit was yet to come. In the first liquid rush of the second current the lava issuing first from two, and then from all three craters, had flowed rapidly for about five miles, and then owing to some lull in the internal action which diminished the supply had slackened its pace, and finally ceased to move altogether. A short time afterwards, however, when the first lava had cooled too much to be pushed forward by any impulse from behind, the workings of the mountain recommenced, and a fresh river poured itself over the old stream, the outside of which had become hard and even solid. This new outflow had in turn begun to cool in the neighbourhood of the craters; and had it been more easy to reach it than was in fact the case, we should have found it little different from what we had already seen. Its lower end however nearly coincided with the foot of the original stream; there it was readily accessible, and there at the spot from which we had seen issue the red light down the valley in the pine-forest, it was still moving at the rate of about a hundred feet in the day. Thither accordingly we went, passing on our road a curious little secondary

branch, which on its turning aside into a valley had been barred egress on every hand, and in a vain attempt to force its way out had hoisted itself some distance up the slope in front of it. It had obviously got there when just so solid that the fore part could not flow back over that which was behind on arriving at the hill, and when just so liquid that, while viscous enough to hold together, it yet offered little resistance to the impulse of the oncoming body.

Not much further on we came in presence of the actually flowing lava stream itself. Essentially the scene was much more striking than that which we had already witnessed. The latter owed much to the contrast of the landscape, still more to the happy accident of the pure morning light. The former had a more terrible grandeur of its own—one which needed nothing to add to it, and which nothing could have lessened. For a mile, it was said, in width, and to an uncertain length of which a mile and a half might be visible, stretched a mass of lava, over the greater part of the colour of black lead. The extreme edge of the front was twenty or thirty feet high; it was not broken into distorted forms, like the edge higher up, but rose gradually in layers like those into which over-thick paste settles in being poured into a cup, showing to the first glance in how fluid a state it had been. A few hundred feet further back was a second stage, composed of the lava of the new stream, which overlay the entirety of the first lava, and spread besides in shallow depth outside the former margin. This, unlike the other, was tossed into pinnacles, one mass of wild incoherent formlessness in detail, yet defining with perfect accuracy the contour of the underlying earth, as the deposit upon petrified flowers defines their form. From its face came no smoke and little steam; but sulphurous gas, like in appearance to that from a limekiln, rendered every shape uncertain, and quivered so densely in the hollows as to merge all substance in a dancing haze, destitute of colour. Along the border of this lava was a sloping wall of red, some ten or fifteen feet high. At first sight it seemed to be stationary; then gradually the eye caught a movement of objects on its surface, of stones, or bits of solid lava, fallen from the hardened top, and at last it could be seen to lap slowly on with even motion, licking under it with absolute indifference to size or kind whatever lay in its course. This slow, silent, never-ceasing lapping of the lava gave a sense of irresistible power, like that conveyed by the action of a slotting machine, which cuts into the thickest iron like a conscious being doing a thing unconsciously because of its insignificance; and at the same time it excited a feeling at once of repulsion and of fascination, as do the movements of a snake, probably from the absence of the noise and of the outward evidence of effort which are the usual concomitants of motion. Something horrible there was too in the lightlessness of the red. Except where some bit, bulging too rapidly, tumbled off and exposed the more glowing red of the inside, the aspect of the fused portion was just as gloomy as that of the solid surface.

If the effect of the lava in itself was grand, there was nothing in the accessories to attenuate the impression which it produced. Here and there on an island of higher earth a pine-tree stood yet in the midst of the flood, otherwise nothing but the belt of forest and the sky troubled by the exhalations from the lava. Here too we rested long, and while we stayed several trees were reached, scorched, then lit, and finally consumed; one huge fir, which threw its branches out at too high a point to be touched, was being gnawed into gradually at about three feet from the ground when we left. Before long that too must have fallen, and must have shared the fate of its brethren. It was perfectly possible, in spite of the intense heat thrown out by the moving portion, to approach near enough to thrust sticks into the burning lava; but the doing so was much like standing in front of a smelting furnace at the moment of its being opened.

We fulfilled our duty as tourists by going through this perfectly objectless and uninteresting ceremony, which had not even, as lava flows at a regular pace, the merit of the slightest danger; and then we departed. It would be a curious subject of speculation to endeavour to find out how the tourist mind first conceived the idea of a moral wrong being involved in the omission to broil eggs in lava holes, to hear echoes, to whisper in whispering-galleries, and to see the private rooms of palaces. Eggs broiled in lava holes eat just like eggs broiled out of lava holes; all echoes are alike; and the private rooms of palaces only differ from other private rooms in being much less comfortable. Nevertheless, to leave out the doing, hearing, and seeing these things would be to most tourists to leave out the cardinal adventures of a trip; and the natives everywhere soon appreciate the fact, and insist upon all strangers, whether of tourist mind or not, going through the ceremonies which they have found to be so attractive to some. It was not worth while to explain at large how foolish it was to put sticks into the lava to be set alight while we were looking at big trees in the act of burning, so we resigned ourselves by the same act to scorch our faces and to gratify our guides.

Our descent presented little of fresh interest. It was like a walk through any other South Italian wood, except that the trees were beyond the usual size. In this part the forest was composed of oaks, many of them very old and gnarled; the ground undulated in its descent, and was besides much broken; withal the foregrounds, bright with the beginnings of spring foliage, which there at the height of five thousand feet does not sprout much earlier than in England, were diverse in the extreme, and all lovely. Opposite, beyond the valley which skirts Etna on the northern side, were the rugged hills which form the lower ranges of the great mountain ridge of the island; sometimes the valley itself, with Piedimonte and Linguagrossa nestling in their olives, opened through a gap; and sometimes, still further to the east, the eye fell over the shelf on which the former town stands, to the sparkling surface of the Mediterranean, caught the promontory of Taormina, and wandered far away to

the Cape of Spartivento and the heights of Aspromonte. As we came lower down, the oak-wood merged in corn, and that by a sudden drop in the walled olive-groves and garden-like enclosures of the valley, among which our scorched white road lay to Piedimonte.

The whole expedition consumed precisely twelve hours, but the halt by the fire was needless; and if the eruption continues, and any reader of this paper should care to repeat the excursion for himself in the shorter days of October, he will find that he may start fully two hours later than we did, with the certainty of being at the point from which the craters are seen at sunrise—undoubtedly the best time, unless the eruption is very violent indeed—and with the further certainty of being again in Piedimonte by ten or half-past ten at latest, after having had ample time for seeing or even for examining. The people of the place, as usual, exaggerate immensely the time necessary, and are themselves extremely slow. At night they, or rather the horses, must be allowed to set the pace; but in daylight I found that it was only two hours' fair walking down hill from the lava stream to the town. I had stayed behind for upwards of an hour to sketch, and easily overtook the rest of the party outside Piedimonte; with grievous distress, however, to the guide who remained with me to show the road. If a tolerable walker could be found to act as guide, any one who chose to go by day, which in many respects would be the most enjoyable time, could do so in six hours and a half of actual walking.

Andrea Ferrara.

—•—
 “Sluicing swords, broad, thinne, and of an excellent temper.” *

WHAT was the age and country of Andrea Ferrara? This is a question which has excited and disappointed the antiquaries of Scotland and England for more than half a century. The inquiry interested Sir Walter Scott through great part of his literary life, was vainly followed by Sir Samuel Meyrick, and occupied the Deputy-Keeper of the Records in Edinburgh during a critical examination of the Chamberlain's and Treasurer's accounts, and all the documents of the Register House likely to have included the entry of payments to the celebrated swordmaker.

These researches were undertaken in consequence of the popular belief that Andrea had visited Scotland—a supposition, however, only founded upon the number of his blades extant in this kingdom, from which it was gratuitously assumed that they had been especially manufactured for Scottish use and within the realm. Originally, however, Ferrara's blades were no less common in all the Western and Southern countries of Europe, while the broad-sword was a popular arm, and only in later periods became more numerous in Scotland, because this weapon was retained among the Highlanders and Borderers for more than a hundred years after it had disappeared in other nations before the rapier and the small-sword; but in the armouries of Spain, Italy, and Germany, especially in the two former regions, the number of Ferrara's blades still bear witness to their ancient prevalence.

The belief being established that the great master had visited Scotland, it was suggested by Sir Walter Scott that he was one of the various foreign artificers invited by James V. to improve the arts and manufactures of his country.† This supposition was very generally received, but no evidence was discovered for its confirmation. Meanwhile, the country of the fabricator remained no less doubtful than his period, for though his surname is one of those derived from nativity or domiciliation, there are towns of Ferrara in Spain,‡ as well as the ducal metropolis in

* Sir JOHN HAYWARD: *Life and Reign of King Edward the Sixth*. 4to. Lond. 1630, p. 30.

† *Pitcott's Chron.* 8vo. Edin. 1814, li. 407.

‡ In the provinces of Lerida, Coruña, and Oviedo. Madoz: *Geog. Españ.* The name is often written indifferently, Ferrara, Ferraria, and Feraria, but this does not affect its identity with Ferrara. For the Italian city is also given as Ferrara, Farara, and Ferare, and all these forms are only examples of the universal uncertainty of orthography in the middle ages, to which the name of the swordmaker was equally subject, appearing on his blades as Ferrara, Ferrara, Farara, and Farara.

Italy; and thus it was uncertain in which of these cities the family of the swordmaker had its origin. From some unknown bias, however, in Sootland, the popular belief was wholly directed to Spain, though apparently this preference had no better foundation than the popular intercourse of the Highlands with that country in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the general celebrity associated with the blades of Bilboa, Toledo, and Valencia, which in later times had superseded the more ancient renown of the once pre-eminent "Milan steel;" but whatever the cause for the nativity imputed to Ferara, a tradition current in the West Highlands explains not only his Celtiberian origin, but the event through which he visited Scotland.

According to this history, Ferara was a Spanish artist, and in the height of his celebrity had an apprentice, who was an excellent workman, and possessed a high spirit of emulation to perfect his skill in the service of so great a master; his ambition, however, was disappointed by a habitude of Andrea, that when the blades were in a certain stage of forging, he excluded the workmen, and locked the door of the atelier while he performed some unknown operation, after which he again admitted the assistants to finish the blades which were in progress. The apprentice was persuaded that this seclusion concealed some occult process which essentially affected the perfection of the arms. Anxious to possess this important secret, upon the first absence of his master, he bored a hole in the door of the atelier, and at the next occasion when he and his fellows were excluded, returned alone to the smithy, and applying his eye to the prepared orifice, discovered his master in the act of drawing a heated blade from the forge. The lad watched with suspended breath. Ferara laid the red steel on the anvil, and taking from a bench a small tin like a flour-dredge, rapidly covered the glowing metal with a coat of white powder, which he then hammered into the iron until it was cold, when he again returned it to the fire, and having given the proper degree of heat, repeated the same operation of powdering and hammering on the other side of the blade. This process was performed in succession upon all the weapons then in progress, until the whole being completed Ferara laid down his hammer and turned towards the door. The varlet perceived that the mystery was at an end, and dreading to be surprised, abandoned his eylet-hole, and fled to his companions, with whom he was immediately recalled to continue their vocations. The apprentice exulted in his discovery, but he could not boast with the ancient sage—"My secret is my own;" and it escaped among his companions. These youths, being less ambitious to emulate the skill of their master than to vaunt the possession of his mystery, their disclosures were soon repeated to Ferara, and one day, when the inquisitive apprentice was alone in the smithy, Andrea entered in a tempest of wrath, and loaded him with reproaches for having betrayed the secret of his art. The young man replied with intemperance; and in the heat of their altercation Ferara struck him on the head with a hammer which he had in his hand, and laid him senseless

at his feet; the blow was fatal, and to avoid pursuit for the homicide, Andrea fled the country, and escaped into France, from whence, in an itinerant exercise of his profession—not uncommon in the middle ages, and still continued in the *Wanderschaft* of Germany—he passed the sea into Scotland.

Whether there is any truth in this tradition, or whether it is a passage in the life of some other eminent armourer confounded with that of Ferrara, will now perhaps never be known, but in the secret operation attributed to this artist there is a singular coincidence with two practical facts—the one in the ordinary manufacture of iron, the other in the operation of the ancient sword-blades of Damascus. In the former carbon and silica are mixed with the ore in the furnace. "The carbon combines with the oxygen of the iron, and escapes in the form of carbonic acid gas, while the silica unites with the lime," which is also present in the furnace, "and forms a kind of fluid glass or scoria which protects the iron from the action of the atmosphere."* In the manufacture of the Damascus scimitars, one of the operations for producing the finest blades was to sprinkle the steel while red hot with diamond and ruby dust, and to hammer the powder into the metal.† This process has been ridiculed by an eminent experimenter for the "ignorant" extravagance "which used" diamond-dust for carbon, and ruby for alumina or silica;‡ but Sir Isaac Newton discovered that diamond is the purest carbon, and ruby is known to combine a mixture of alumina with a large proportion of the finest silica. It is therefore probable that the operation of the Damascus smiths was founded in a sensibility of these principles, and that, far from the result of "ignorance," it was derived from that profound knowledge of chemistry in which the Saracens had been the masters of the Western world. Whether, however, the operation was efficacious or vain, is not a question here, where we have only to consider the coincidence between the Damascus and the reputed Spanish process. That they were identical in matter as in formula, may however be doubtful, from the improbability that a medium so costly as jewel-dust could have been commanded by a trans-Pyrenean smith. The identity of operation, however, is unequivocal, and this community in facts is enhanced by a community of origin in the arts of the operators; for all the chemistry of Spain was derived from the Moors, and these were only the Western line of the Saracens, who were equally the parent stock of the mediæval Syrians; and though the Spanish artist should not have used diamond and ruby dust, he might—as suggested by the British critic—have substituted the simpler elements of the same principles, carbon in the forge, and silica and alumina in "the white powder" amalgamated on the anvil.

In these considerations we have received the operation attributed to

* WILKINSON'S *Engines of War*, p. 224.

† *Atable MS.* in the *Roswicky Library*. By an erratum in WILKINSON'S *Engines of War*, p. 211, the title of the *orientalist* is given as "*Roswicky*."

‡ WILKINSON'S *Engines of War*, p. 224.

Ferara without any relation to his nationality; partly because the circumstantial evidence of the tradition indicates a verity in fact—partly, that whatever the nativity of the operator, he might at some period of his life have wrought in the forges of Spain,* or, as before said, that the legend may have originated with another master, and become associated with Ferara by one of those various transmigrations which sometimes confound the personages of oral record; but whether the story applied to Andrea or to another, we have now to show that in the height of his profession he was established at the town of Belluno in Friuli, an ancient duchy of Illyria, which in 1420 was added to Venice; and though in the succeeding year the eastern portion was seized by Austria, the city of Belluno and the remaining territory continued under the dominion of the Doges until 1797. The evidence of Ferara's domiciliation in this province is contained in a chapter upon the most renowned swordmakers of Italy in the sixteenth century—part of a once highly esteemed military treatise, published at Venice in 1585; and as the account illustrates the celebrity of the artist by showing the pre-eminence of the masters with whom he was associated, we shall give the text without diminution:—

“LAME DA SPADE, STOCCHI, PUGNALI, ET ARME DA INSTARE.

“Se la cogitatione de i luoghi et de i maestri de me discripta sin'hora sarà pumograta, et di qualche commodità a tutti soldati, maggiormente, sarà questa ad ogni altra qualità di persone, le quali tal sorte d'armi sogliono esercitare como sono spade, spadone, stocchi, cortelazzi et mazze de cavalli, con pugnali et arme da instare d'ogni sorte che si usano. De i maestri delle quali volendo alcuno sapere il nome traslasciando molti, mi restringero ne i piu eccellente che se ritrovino; et de i luoghi et paesi lasciando adietro la grandissima Alemagna, la Francia, et nella Spagna la famoso Valenza, dove si tronano infinite arme d'ogni sorte: uerro all' Italia, alla quale daremo con ogni ragione il pregio et uanto di quest' arte. Et primeramente diremo di Milano, cioè nel castello si lauorano perfettissimi lauori di lame da spade et pugnali, et di diuerse altre uarie sorti de lame, che sono di buone et finissime tempre. Di Brescia non mi estendero molto, ma solo toccando il nome di due fratelli, ambi maestri sopra ogn'altro eccellentissimi, i quali sono Simone et Serafino, figliuoli & heredi del famoso et tanto celebrato Maestro Serafino, che faceva lame con tempre miracolose, et di esso si dice che fece una spada a un gran Principe, di tanta eccellenza, che gli dono in pagamento meglio di cinquecento ducati, oltre altre infinite marauigli che di esso si raccontano. In un' altro luogo chiamato Gron su'l territorio Bergamasco, si trouano alcuni valenti maestri, et si chiamano quelli di Abram, che hanno bonissimo nome in quest' arte: della quale ancora perfettissimamente si lauoro in Saraualla, et Cindal de Bellun, luogi del Friuli, ne i quale si trouano ualentissimi maestri d'ogni sorte gioue in Saraualla, Maestro Pegin da Feltren, huomo famosissimo et raro, il quale alle sue forpaci fa lauorieri miracolosissimi, & in Cindal di Bellun sono gli ingegneri Maestro Giouan Donato et Maestro Andrea de i Ferari, ambidue fratelli, i quali stanno alle fucine di Messer Giouan Battista detto il Barcelone. Nel territorio Vicentino, al Monte della Madonna, a canto il fiume Heron, u'è un ualentissimo huomo detto Maestro Lorenzo da Formigano, soprannominato 'il Zotto;' questo hà bucciosissime lame, & fa cose d'arme marauigliose di bellezza et bontà.”†

* In this alternative presumption, it is to be observed that the tradition defines only the operative domiciliation, and not the nationality of Ferara; that he was a “Spanish artist,” but not that he was a native of Spain.

† GIOVAN MATTEO CICOGNA. *Treatise Militare*: etc, Venetia, 1585, fol. 42.

"Though the knowledge of the places and the masters described by me, will be principally interesting to soldiers, it will also be acceptable to every other condition of persons, who are accustomed to exercise such arms as swords, broad-swords, rapiers, cutlasses, horsemen's maces, poniards, and damascened arms of all the kinds which are in use. Of those masters of whom it may be desired to know the names, omitting many in the illustrious Germany, France, and in Spain the famous Valencia, where are found numerous arms of every sort, I shall confine myself to the most excellent, with their places and countries, in Italy; to which, with every reason, we will give the pre-eminence and boast in this art. And first we will speak of Milan, where in the castle are wrought most perfect works in blades of swords, and poniards, and divers other various sorts of blades, which are of good and finest temper. Of Brescia I will not relate much, only touching the names of two brothers—both masters above all others the most excellent, and who are Simone and Serafino, sons and heirs of the so much celebrated Master Serafino who made blades of miraculous temper, and of whom it was said that he made a sword for a great Prince of such excellence, that he gave him in payment better than five hundred ducats, besides other infinite marvels which are told of him. In another place called Gron, on the territory of Bergamasco, are found some valiant masters called Abram, who have a very good name in their art, which also is wrought most perfectly in Saravalle, and in the town of Belluno, places in Friuli, in which are found excellent masters of every sort; that is, in Serravalle, Master Pegin da Feltran, a very famous and rare man, who, in his forges, makes miraculous works; and in the town of Bellano are the ingenious Masters Giovan Donato and *Andrea of the Feraras*, both brothers, of the foundry of Master Giovan Battista, called 'the Barcelonian.' Of the territory of Vicentino, at Monte della Madonna, on the bank of the Rezon, is a most valiant man called Master Lorenzo da Formignano, called by sobriquet 'the Dolt,' who has the best fame, and makes marvellous arms for beauty and for excellence."

The date of this notice gives an approximate indication for the period of Ferara's birth, for since he is associated with the swordmakers of the greatest celebrity in the year 1585, such eminence could scarcely have been attained under the age of thirty years; from whence it may be assumed that he was born about the year 1555. The question of his country, however, may still be liable to the cavil, that as his master Giovanni Battista was named "the Barcelonian," and, therefore, evidently a Spaniard, it may be conjectured that the brothers, Giovan Donato and Andrea Ferara, were brought by him to Italy. This supposition, however, is expressly contradicted by the author of the treatise, in the declaration that he forbore to mention the artists of Germany, France, and Spain, and restricted his celebration to those of Italy alone. The notice of "the Barcelonian" is no exception of this rule, since he is only introduced incidentally as the master of Ferara, without any reference to his own operation, and it is not even necessarily conclusive that he was established in Italy; for according to the prevailing usage of the mediæval craftsmen to improve their skill in foreign schools, his pupils, Andrea and Giovanni, might have resorted to Spain, to perfect their apprenticeship under a celebrated master.

But that Ferara was a native of Italy is confirmed by the evidence that before and during his time there were others of the same surname, swordmakers in that country. This is sufficiently indicated by the mode of his denomination—"de i Ferni," of the "*Feraras*," which expresses

that a family of this appellation was then established, and familiarly known, if not celebrated, in the peninsula; and that they were of native extraction is confirmed by the before-mentioned restriction of their recorder to the artists of his own country. From whence it may be concluded that the origin of the Ferari was in the ducal city of the same name. These assumptions are confirmed by the existence of blades bearing the name of Coamo, and of Piero Ferara, the last of a form coeval with those of Andrea, the first of a period about two generations anterior. The time and country of both these makers are indicated by circumstantial associations; of Piero the nationality is presumptive in the name, which for a Spaniard had been "Pedro," while his era is evinced by the form of his blades corresponding in model with those of Andrea. In the instance of Cosmo, the nationality is no less expressed by an appellation almost exclusively Italian, and the period by the form of weapons, identified with the first half of the sixteenth century. This datum is confirmed by a splendid two-handed sword in our possession, bearing the distinctive features of that time, marked with the name Cosmo Ferara, accompanied by the tradition that it belonged originally to the celebrated Italian general, Prospero Colonna, who died in 1528.

From all these combinations there results a chain of circumstantial evidence, closely approaching to demonstration, that Andrea Ferara was born about the year 1553, that he was of a family of armourers which had existed in Italy at least two generations before that time, and of whom the first, like Giovanni de Bologna, Leonardo da Vinci, Paolo Veronese, and a crowd of mediæval artists, derived his nomination from the place of his nativity—the ducal city of Ferrara.

Of Giovan Donato we know nothing beyond the notice of Cigogna; but since he is called the brother of Andrea, it is uncertain whether he was the son of the same mother and of another father, or whether the name of Donato was only a second baptismal appellation. This supposition is rendered probable from the general mediæval usage of Italy, in the popular nomination of artists by their Christian names alone, as Guido, Raphael, Claude, Salvator, Michel-Angelo, &c., an inference which is confirmed by the apparent similar example in the designation of the brother armourers, Simone and Serafino, "figlioli del famoso Serafino," in which it is evident that not only the name of Simone, but that of the Serafini, father and son, was a baptismal and not a surname, for, if otherwise, the elder Serafino should have been distinguished by his prænomen. From all these considerations, therefore, it is probably conclusive that the entire name of Giovanni was "Giovan Donato Ferrara," and that he was full brother to Andrea.



THE TEMPTING MOMENT

Annals.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER XIII.

EXIT.



T rained all through the night; and when the morning came, it was raining still.

Contrary to his ordinary habit, Midwinter was waiting in the breakfast-room when Allan entered it. He looked worn and weary, but his smile was gentler, and his manner more composed than usual. To Allan's surprise he approached the subject of the previous night's conversation of his own accord as soon as the servant was out of the room.

"I am afraid you thought me very impatient and very abrupt with you last night," he said. "I will try to make amends for it this morning. I will hear

everything you wish to say to me on the subject of Miss Gwilt."

"I hardly like to worry you," said Allan. "You look as if you had had a bad night's rest."

"I have not slept well for some time past," replied Midwinter quietly. "Something has been wrong with me. But I believe I have found out the way to put myself right again without troubling the doctors. Later in the morning I shall have something to say to you about this. Let us get back first to what you were talking of last night. You were speaking of some difficulty——" He hesitated, and finished the sentence in a tone so low that Allan failed to hear him. "Perhaps it would be better," he went on, "if, instead of speaking to me, you spoke to Mr. Brock?"

"I would rather speak to you," said Allan. "But tell me first, was I right or wrong last night in thinking you disapproved of my falling in love with Miss Gwilt?"

Midwinter's lean nervous fingers began to crumble the bread in his plate. His eyes looked away from Allan for the first time.

"If you have any objection," persisted Allan, "I should like to hear it."

Midwinter suddenly looked up again, his cheeks turning ashy pale, and his glittering black eyes fixed full on Allan's face.

"You love her," he said. "Does *she* love you?"

"You won't think me vain?" returned Allan. "I told you yesterday I had had private opportunities with her——"

Midwinter's eyes dropped again to the crumbs on his plate. "I understand," he interposed quickly. "You were wrong last night. I had no objections to make."

"Don't you congratulate me?" asked Allan, a little uneasily. "Such a beautiful woman! such a clever woman!"

Midwinter held out his hand. "I owe you more than mere congratulations," he said. "In anything which is for your happiness I owe you help." He took Allan's hand, and wrung it hard. "Can I help you?" he asked, growing paler and paler as he spoke.

"My dear fellow!" exclaimed Allan, "what is the matter with you? Your hand is as cold as ice."

Midwinter smiled faintly. "I am always in extremes," he said; "my hand was as hot as fire the first time you took it at the old West-country inn. Come to that difficulty which you have not come to yet. You are young, rich, your own master—and she loves you. What difficulty can there be?"

Allan hesitated. "I hardly know how to put it," he replied. "As you said just now, I love her, and she loves me—and yet there is a sort of strangeness between us. One talks a good deal about one's self, when one is in love—at least, I do. I've told her all about myself, and my mother, and how I came in for this place, and the rest of it. Well—though it doesn't strike me when we are together—it comes across me now and then, when I'm away from her, that she doesn't say much on her side. In fact, I know no more about her than you do."

"Do you mean that you know nothing about Miss Gwilt's family and friends?"

"That's it, exactly."

"Have you never asked her about them?"

"I said something of the sort the other day," returned Allan; "and I'm afraid, as usual, I said it in the wrong way. She looked—I can't quite tell you how; not exactly displeased, but—oh, what things words are! I'd give the world, Midwinter, if I could only find the right word when I want it, as well as you do."

"Did Miss Gwilt say anything to you in the way of a reply?"

"That's just what I was coming to. She said, 'I shall have a melancholy story to tell you one of these days, Mr. Armadale, about myself and my family; but you look so happy, and the circumstances

are so distressing, that I have hardly the heart to speak of it now.' Ah, *she* can express herself—with the tears in her eyes, my dear fellow, with the tears in her eyes! Of course I changed the subject directly. And now the difficulty is how to get back to it, delicately, without making her cry again. We *must* get back to it, you know. Not on my account; I am quite content to marry her first and hear of her family misfortunes, poor thing, afterwards. But I know Mr. Brock. If I can't satisfy him about her family when I write to tell him of this (which of course I must do), he will be dead against the whole thing. I'm my own master of course, and I can do as I like about it. But dear old Brock was such a good friend to my poor mother, and he has been such a good friend to me—you see what I mean, don't you?"

"Certainly, Allan; Mr. Brock has been your second father. Any disagreement between you about such a serious matter as this, would be the saddest thing that could happen. You ought to satisfy him that Miss Gwilt is (what I am sure Miss Gwilt will prove to be) worthy, in every way worthy——" His voice sank in spite of him, and he left the sentence unfinished.

"Just my feeling in the matter!" Allan struck in glibly. "Now we can come to what I particularly wanted to consult you about. If this was your case, Midwinter, you would be able to say the right words to her—you would put it delicately, even though you were putting it quite in the dark. I can't do that. I'm a blundering sort of fellow; and I'm horribly afraid, if I can't get some hint at the truth to help me at starting, of saying something to distress her. Family misfortunes are such tender subjects to touch on—especially with such a refined woman, such a tender-hearted woman, as Miss Gwilt. There may have been some dreadful death in the family—some relation who has disgraced himself—some infernal cruelty which has forced the poor thing out on the world as a governess. Well, turning it over in my mind, it struck me that the major might be able to put me on the right tack. It is quite possible that he might have been informed of Miss Gwilt's family circumstances before he engaged her—isn't it?"

"It is possible, Allan, certainly."

"Just my feeling again! My notion is, to speak to the major. If I could only get the story from him first, I should know so much better how to speak to Miss Gwilt about it afterwards. You advise me to try the major, don't you?"

There was a pause before Midwinter replied. When he did answer it was a little reluctantly.

"I hardly know how to advise you, Allan," he said. "This is a very delicate matter."

"I believe you would try the major, if you were in my place," returned Allan, reverting to his inveterately personal way of putting the question.

"Perhaps I might," said Midwinter, more and more unwillingly,

"But if I did speak to the major, I should be very careful, in your place, not to put myself in a false position—I should be very careful to let no one suspect me of the meanness of prying into a woman's secrets behind her back."

Allan's face flushed. "Good heavens, Midwinter," he exclaimed, "who could suspect me of that?"

"Nobody, Allan, who really knows you."

"The major knows me. The major is the last man in the world to misunderstand me. All I want him to do, is to help me (if he can) to speak about a delicate subject to Miss Gwilt, without hurting her feelings. Can anything be simpler between two gentlemen?"

Instead of replying, Midwinter, still speaking as constrainedly as ever, asked a question on his side. "Do you mean to tell Major Milroy," he said, "what your intentions really are towards Miss Gwilt?"

Allan's manner altered. He hesitated and looked confused.

"I have been thinking of that," he replied; "and I mean to feel my way first, and then tell him or not afterwards, as matters turn out."

A proceeding so cautious as this, was too strikingly inconsistent with Allan's character not to surprise any one who knew him. Midwinter showed his surprise plainly.

"You forget that foolish flirtation of mine with Miss Milroy," Allan went on, more and more confusedly. "The major may have noticed it, and may have thought I meant—well, what I didn't mean. It might be rather awkward, mightn't it, to propose to his face for his governess instead of his daughter?"

He waited for a word of answer, but none came. Midwinter opened his lips to speak, and suddenly checked himself. Allan, uneasy at his silence, doubly uneasy under certain recollections of the major's daughter which the conversation had called up, rose from the table, and shortened the interview a little impatiently.

"Come! come!" he said, "don't sit there looking unutterable things—don't make mountains out of molehills. You have such an old, old head, Midwinter, on those young shoulders of yours? Let's have done with all these pros and cons. Do you mean to tell me in plain words, that it won't do to speak to the major?"

"I can't take the responsibility, Allan, of telling you that. To be plainer still, I can't feel confident of the soundness of any advice I may give you, in—in our present position towards each other. All I am sure of is, that I cannot possibly be wrong in entreating you to do two things."

"What are they?"

"If you speak to Major Milroy, pray remember the caution I have given you! Pray think of what you say, before you say it!"

"I'll think—never fear! What next?"

"Before you take any serious step in this matter, write and tell Mr. Brook. Will you promise me to do that?"

"With all my heart. Anything more?"

"Nothing more. I have said my last words."

Allan led the way to the door. "Come into my room," he said, "and I'll give you a cigar. The servants will be in here directly, to clear away; and I want to go on talking about Miss Gwilt."

"Don't wait for me," said Midwinter; "I'll follow you in a minute or two."

He remained seated until Allan had closed the door—then rose, and took from a corner of the room, where it lay hidden behind one of the curtains, a knapsack ready packed for travelling. As he stood at the window thinking, with the knapsack in his hand, a strangely old, careworn look stole over his face: he seemed to lose the last of his youth in an instant.

What the woman's quicker insight had discovered days since, the man's slower perception had only realized in the past night. The pang that had wrung him when he heard Allan's avowal, had set the truth self-revealed before Midwinter for the first time. He had been conscious, or looking at Miss Gwilt with new eyes and a new mind, on the next occasion when they met after the memorable interview in Major Milroy's garden; he had been conscious of his growing interest thenceforth in her society, and his growing admiration of her beauty—but he had never until now known the passion that she had roused in him for what it really was. Knowing it at last, feeling it consciously in full possession of him, he had the courage which no man with a happier experience of life would have possessed—the courage to recall what Allan had said to him, and to look resolutely at the future through his own grateful remembrances of the past.

Steadfastly, through the sleepless hours of the night, he had contemplated the sacrifice of himself to the dearest interest of his friend, as part of the great debt of gratitude that he owed to Allan. Steadfastly he had bent his mind to the conviction that he must conquer the passion which had taken possession of him, for Allan's sake; and that the one way to to conquer it was—to go. No after-doubt as to the sacrifice had troubled him when morning came; and no after-doubt troubled him now. The one question that kept him hesitating was the question of leaving Thorpe-Ambrose. Though Mr. Brock's letter relieved him from all necessity of keeping watch in Norfolk for a woman who was known to be in Somersetshire; though the duties of the steward's office were duties which might be safely left in Mr. Bashwood's tried and trustworthy hands—still, admitting these considerations, his mind was not easy at the thought of leaving Allan, at a time when a crisis was approaching in Allan's life.

He slung the knapsack loosely over his shoulder, and put the question to his conscience for the last time. "Can you trust yourself to see her, day by day, as you must see her—can you trust yourself to hear him talk of her, hour by hour, as you must hear him—if you stay in this

house?" Again the answer came, as it had come all through the night. Again his heart warned him, in the very interests of the friendship that he held sacred, to go while the time was his own; to go before the woman who had possessed herself of his love had possessed herself of his power of self-sacrifice and his sense of gratitude as well.

He looked round the room mechanically, before he turned to leave it. Every remembrance of the conversation that had just taken place between Allan and himself pointed to the same conclusion, and warned him, as his own conscience had warned him, to go. Had he honestly mentioned any one of the objections which he, or any man, must have seen to Allan's attachment? Had he—as his knowledge of his friend's facile character bound him to do—warned Allan to distrust his own hasty impulses, and to test himself by time and absence, before he made sure that the happiness of his whole life was bound up in Miss Gwilt? No. The bare doubt whether, in speaking of these things, he could feel that he was speaking disinterestedly, had closed his lips, and would close his lips for the future, till the time for speaking had gone by. Was the right man to restrain Allan, the man who would have given the world, if he had it, to stand in Allan's place? There was but one plain course of action that an honest man and a grateful man could follow in the position in which he stood. Far removed from all chance of seeing her, and from all chance of hearing of her—alone with his own faithful recollection of what he owed to his friend—he might hope to fight it down, as he had fought down the tears in his childhood, under his gipsy master's stick; as he had fought down the misery of his lonely youth-time in the country bookseller's shop. "I must go," he said, as he turned wearily from the window, "before she comes to the house again. I must go before another hour is over my head."

With that resolution he left the room; and, in leaving it, took the irrevocable step from Present to Future.

The rain was still falling. The sullen sky, all round the horizon, still lowered watery and dark, when Midwinter, equipped for travelling, appeared in Allan's room.

"Good heavens!" cried Allan, pointing to the knapsack, "what does *that* mean?"

"Nothing very extraordinary," said Midwinter. "It only means—good-by."

"Good-by!" repeated Allan, starting to his feet in astonishment.

Midwinter put him back gently into his chair, and drew a seat near to it for himself.

"When you noticed that I looked ill this morning," he said, "I told you that I had been thinking of a way to recover my health, and that I meant to speak to you about it later in the day. That later time has come. I have been out of sorts, as the phrase is, for some time past. You have remarked it yourself, Allan, more than once; and, with your usual kind-

ness, you have allowed it to excuse many things in my conduct which would have been otherwise unpardonable, even in your friendly eyes."

"My dear fellow," interposed Allan, "you don't mean to say you are going out on a walking tour in this pouring rain!"

"Never mind the rain," rejoined Midwinter. "The rain and I are old friends. You know something, Allan, of the life I led before you met with me. From the time when I was a child, I have been used to hardship and exposure. Night and day, sometimes for months together, I never had my head under a roof. For years and years, the life of a wild animal—perhaps I ought to say, the life of a savage—was the life I led, while you were at home and happy. I have the leaven of the vagabond—the vagabond animal, or the vagabond man, I hardly know which—in me still. Does it distress you to hear me talk of myself in this way? I won't distress you. I will only say that the comfort and the luxury of our life here are, at times, I think, a little too much for a man to whom comforts and luxuries come as strange things. I want nothing to put me right again but more air and exercise; fewer good breakfasts and dinners, my dear friend, than I get here. Let me go back to some of the hardships which this comfortable house is expressly made to shut out. Let me meet the wind and weather as I used to meet them when I was a boy; let me feel weary again for a little while, without a carriage near to pick me up; and hungry when the night falls, with miles of walking between my supper and me. Give me a week or two away, Allan—up northward, on foot, to the Yorkshire moors—and I promise to return to Thorpe-Ambrose, better company for you and for your friends. I shall be back before you have time to miss me. Mr. Bashwood will take care of the business in the office; it is only for a fortnight, and it is for my own good—let me go!"

"I don't like it," said Allan. "I don't like your leaving me in this sudden manner. There's something so strange and dreary about it. Why not try riding, if you want more exercise; all the horses in the stables are at your disposal. At all events, you can't possibly go to-day. Look at the rain!"

Midwinter looked towards the window, and gently shook his head.

"I thought nothing of the rain," he said, "when I was a mere child, getting my living with the dancing dogs—why should I think anything of it now? My getting wet, and your getting wet, Allan, are two very different things. When I was a fisherman's boy in the Hebrides, I hadn't a dry thread on me for weeks together."

"But you're not in the Hebrides now," persisted Allan; "and I expect our friends from the cottage to-morrow evening. You can't start till after to-morrow. Miss Gwilt is going to give us some more music, and you know you like Miss Gwilt's playing."

Midwinter turned aside to buckle the straps of his knapsack. "Give me another chance of hearing Miss Gwilt when I come back," he said, with his head down, and his fingers busy at the straps.

"You have one fault, my dear fellow, and it grows on you," remonstrated Allan; "when you have once taken a thing into your head, you're the most obstinate man alive. There's no persuading you to listen to reason. If you *will* go," added Allan, suddenly rising as Midwinter took up his hat and stick in silence, "I have half a mind to go with you, and try a little roughing it too!"

"Go with me!" repeated Midwinter, with a momentary bitterness in his tone, "and leave Miss Gwilt!"

Allan sat down again, and admitted the force of the objection in significant silence. Without a word more on his side, Midwinter held out his hand to take leave. They were both deeply moved, and each was anxious to hide his agitation from the other. Allan took the last refuge which his friend's firmness left to him, he tried to lighten the farewell moment by a joke.

"I'll tell you what," he said, "I begin to doubt if you're quite cured yet of your belief in the Dream. I suspect you're running away from me, after all!"

Midwinter looked at him, uncertain whether he was in jest or earnest. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"What did you tell me," retorted Allan, "when you took me in here the other day, and made a clean breast of it? What did you say about this room and the second vision of the dream? By Jupiter!" he exclaimed, starting to his feet once more, "now I look again, here is the Second Vision! There's the rain pattering against the window—there's the lawn and the garden outside—here am I where I stood in the Dream—and there are you where the Shadow stood. The whole scene complete, out of doors and in; and I've discovered it this time!"

A moment's life stirred again in the dead remains of Midwinter's superstition. His colour changed; and he eagerly, almost fiercely, disputed Allan's conclusion.

"No!" he said, pointing to the little marble figure on the bracket, "the scene is *not* complete—you have forgotten something as usual. The Dream is wrong this time, thank God—utterly wrong! In the vision you saw, the statue was lying in fragments on the floor; and you were stooping over them with a troubled and an angry mind. There stands the statue safe and sound!—and you haven't the vestige of an angry feeling in your mind, have you?" He seized Allan impulsively by the hand. At the same moment the consciousness came to him that he was speaking and acting as earnestly as if he still believed in the Dream. The colour rushed back over his face, and he turned away in confused silence.

"What did I tell you?" said Allan, laughing a little unasily. "That night on the Wreck is hanging on your mind as heavily as ever."

"Nothing hangs heavy on me," retorted Midwinter, with a sudden outburst of impatience, "but the knapsack on my back, and the time I'm wasting here. I'll go out, and see if it's likely to clear up."

"You'll come back?" interposed Allan.

Midwinter opened the French window, and stepped out into the garden.

"Yea," he said, answering with all his former gentleness of manner, "I'll come back in a fortnight. Good-by, Allan; and good luck with Miss Gwilt!"

He pushed the window to, and was away across the garden before his friend could open it again and follow him.

Allan rose, and took one step into the garden; then checked himself at the window, and returned to his chair. He knew Midwinter well enough to feel the total uselessness of attempting to follow him, or to call him back. He was gone, and for two weeks to come there was no hope of seeing him again. An hour or more passed, the rain still fell, and the sky still threatened. A heavier and heavier sense of loneliness and despondency—the sense of all others which his previous life had least fitted him to understand and endure—possessed itself of Allan's mind. In sheer horror of his own uninhabitably solitary house, he rang for his hat and umbrella, and resolved to take refuge in the major's cottage.

"I might have gone a little way with him," thought Allan, his mind still running on Midwinter as he put on his hat. "I should like to have seen the dear old fellow fairly started on his journey."

He took his umbrella. If he had noticed the face of the servant who gave it to him, he might possibly have asked some questions, and might have heard some news to interest him in his present frame of mind. As it was, he went out without looking at the man, and without suspecting that his servants knew more of Midwinter's last moments at Thorpe-Ambrose than he knew himself. Not ten minutes since, the grocer and the butcher had called in to receive payment of their bills—and the grocer and the butcher had seen how Midwinter started on his journey.

The grocer had met him first, not far from the house, stopping on his way, in the pouring rain, to speak to a little ragged imp of a boy, the pest of the neighbourhood. The boy's customary impudence had broken out even more unrestrainedly than usual at the sight of the gentleman's knapsack. And what had the gentleman done in return? He had stopped and looked distressed, and had put his two hands gently on the boy's shoulders. The grocer's own eyes had seen that; and the grocer's own ears had heard him say, "Poor little chap! I know how the wind gnaws and the rain wets through a ragged jacket, better than most people who have got a good coat on their backs." And with those words he had put his hand in his pocket, and had rewarded the boy's impudence with a present of a shilling. "Wrong hereabouts," said the grocer, touching his forehead. "That's my opinion of Mr. Armadale's friend!"

The butcher had seen him farther on in the journey, at the other end of the town. He had stopped—again in the pouring rain—and this time to look at nothing more remarkable than a half-starved cur, shivering on a doorstep. "I had my eye on him," said the butcher; "and what do you think he did? He crossed the road over to my shop, and bought a bit of meat fit for a Christian. Very well. He says good-morning, and

crosses back again ; and, on the word of a man, down he goes on his knees on the wet doorstep, and out he takes his knife, and cuts up the meat, and gives it to the dog. Meat, I tell you again, fit for a Christian ! I'm not a hard man, ma'am," concluded the butcher, addressing the cook, " but meat's meat ; and it will serve your master's friend right if he lives to want it."

With those old unforgotten sympathies of the old unforgotten time to keep him company on his lonely road, he had left the town behind him, and had been lost to view in the misty rain. The grocer and the butcher had seen the last of him, and had judged a great nature, as all great natures *are* judged from the grocer and the butcher point of view.

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

BOOK THE FOURTH.



CHAPTER I.

MRS. MILROY.

Two days after Midwinter's departure from Thorpe-Ambrose, Mrs. Milroy, having completed her morning toilette, and having dismissed her nurse, rang the bell again five minutes afterwards, and on the woman's reappearance, asked impatiently, if the post had come in.

"Post?" echoed the nurse. "Haven't you got your watch? Don't you know that it's a good half-hour too soon to ask for your letters?" She spoke with the confident insolence of a servant long accustomed to presume on her mistress's weakness, and her mistress's necessities. Milroy, on her side, appeared to be well used to her nurse's manner; she gave her orders composedly, without noticing it.

"When the postman does come," she said, "see him yourself. I am expecting a letter which I ought to have had two days since. I don't understand it. I'm beginning to suspect the servants."

The nurse smiled contemptuously. "Who will you suspect next?" she asked. "There! don't put yourself out. I'll answer the gate-bell this morning; and we'll see if I can't bring you a letter when the postman comes." Saying those words, with the tone and manner of a woman who is quieting a fractious child, the nurse, without waiting to be dismissed, left the room.

Mrs. Milroy turned slowly and wearily on her bed, when she was left by herself again, and let the light from the window fall on her face.

It was the face of a woman who had once been handsome, and who was still, so far as years went, in the prime of her life. Long-continued

suffering of body, and long-continued irritation of mind, had worn her away—in the roughly-expressive popular phrase—to skin and bone. The utter wreck of her beauty was made a wreck horrible to behold, by her desperate efforts to conceal the sight of it from her own eyes, from the eyes of her husband and her child, from the eyes even of the doctor who attended her, and whose business it was to penetrate to the truth. Her head, from which the greater part of the hair had fallen off, would have been less shocking to see than the hideously youthful wig, by which she tried to hide the loss. No deterioration of her complexion, no wrinkling of her skin, could have been so dreadful to look at as the rouge that lay thick on her cheeks, and the white enamel plastered on her forehead. The delicate lace, and the bright trimming on her dressing-gown, the ribbons in her cap, and the rings on her bony fingers, all intended to draw the eye away from the change that had passed over her, directed the eye to it on the contrary; emphasized it; made it by sheer force of contrast more hopeless and more horrible than it really was. An illustrated book of the fashions, in which women were represented exhibiting their finery by means of the free use of their limbs, lay on the bed from which she had not moved for years, without being lifted by her nurse. A hand-glass was placed with the book so that she could reach it easily. She took up the glass after her attendant had left the room, and looked at her face with an unblushing interest and attention which she would have been ashamed of herself at the age of eighteen.

"Older and older, and thinner and thinner!" she said. "The major will soon be a free man—but I'll have that red-haired hussy out of the house first!"

She dropped the looking-glass on the counterpane, and clenched the hand that had held it. Her eyes suddenly riveted themselves on a little crayon portrait of her husband hanging on the opposite wall; they looked at the likeness with the hard and cruel brightness of the eyes of a bird of prey. "Red is your taste in your old age, is it?" she said to the portrait. "Red hair and a scrofulous complexion and a padded figure, a ballet-girl's walk, and a pickpocket's light fingers. *Miss Gwilt!* *Miss*, with those eyes, and that walk!" She turned her head suddenly on the pillow, and burst into a harsh, jeering laugh. "*Miss!*" she repeated over and over again, with the venomously-pointed emphasis of the most merciless of all human forms of contempt—the contempt of one woman for another.

The age we live in is an age which finds no human creature inexcusable. Is there an excuse for Mrs. Milroy? Let the story of her life answer the question.

She had married the major at an unusually early age; and, in marrying him, had taken a man for her husband who was old enough to be her father—a man who, at that time, had the reputation, and not unjustly, of having made the freest use of his social gifts, and his advantages of personal appearance in the society of women. Indifferently educated, and

below her husband in station, she had begun by accepting his addresses under the influence of her own flattered vanity, and had ended by feeling the fascination which Major Milroy had exercised over women infinitely her mental superiors, in his earlier life. He had been touched, on his side, by her devotion, and had felt, in his turn, the attraction of her beauty, her freshness, and her youth. Up to the time when their little daughter and only child had reached the age of eight years, their married life had been an unusually happy one. At that period, the double misfortune fell on the household, of the failure of the wife's health, and the almost total loss of the husband's fortune; and from that moment, the domestic happiness of the married pair was virtually at an end.

Having reached the age when men in general are readier, under the pressure of calamity, to resign themselves than to resist, the major had secured the little relics of his property, had retired into the country, and had patiently taken refuge in his mechanical pursuits. A woman nearer to him in age, or a woman with a better training and more patience of disposition than his wife possessed, would have understood the major's conduct, and have found consolation in the major's submission. Mrs. Milroy found consolation in nothing. Neither nature nor training helped her to meet resignedly the cruel calamity which had struck at her in the bloom of womanhood and the prime of beauty. The curse of incurable sickness blighted her at once and for life.

Suffering can, and does, develope the latent evil that there is in humanity, as well as the latent good. The good that was in Mrs. Milroy's nature shrank up under that subtly-deteriorating influence in which the evil grew and flourished. Month by month as she became the weaker woman physically, she became the worse woman morally. All that was mean, cruel, and false in her, expanded in steady proportion to the contraction of all that had once been generous, gentle, and true. Old suspicions of her husband's readiness to relapse into the irregularities of his bachelor life, which, in her healthier days of mind and body, she had openly confessed to him—which she had always sooner or later seen to be suspicions that he had not deserved—came back, now that sickness had divorced her from him, in the form of that baser conjugal distrust which keeps itself cunningly secret; which gathers together its inflammatory particles atom by atom into a heap, and sets the slowly-burning frenzy of jealousy alight in the mind. No proof of her husband's blameless and patient life that could now be shown to Mrs. Milroy; no appeal that could be made to her respect for herself, or for her child growing up to womanhood, availed to dissipate the terrible delusion born of her hopeless illness, and growing steadily with its growth. Like all other madness it had its ebb and flow, its time of spasmodic outburst, and its time of deceitful repose—but active or passive, it was always in her. It had injured innocent servants, and insulted blameless strangers. It had brought the first tears of shame and sorrow into her daughter's eyes, and had set the deepest lines that scored it in her husband's face. It had made the secret misery of the little

household for years—and it was now to pass beyond the family limits, and to influence coming events at Thorpe-Ambrose, in which the future interests of Allan and Allan's friend were vally concerned.

A moment's glance at the posture of domestic affairs in the cottage, prior to the engagement of the new governess, is necessary to the due appreciation of the serious consequences that followed Miss Gwilt's appearance on the scene.

On the marriage of the governess who had lived in his service for many years (a woman of an age and an appearance to set even Mrs. Milroy's jealousy at defiance), the major had considered the question of sending his daughter away from home, far more seriously than his wife supposed. On the one hand, he was conscious that scenes took place in the house at which no young girl should be present. On the other, he felt an invincible reluctance to apply the one efficient remedy—the keeping his daughter away from home in school-time and holiday-time alike. The struggle thus raised in his mind once set at rest, by the resolution to advertise for a new governess, Major Milroy's natural tendency to avoid trouble rather than to meet it, had declared itself in its customary manner. He had closed his eyes again on his home anxieties as quietly as usual, and had gone back, as he had gone back on hundreds of previous occasions, to the consoling society of his old friend the clock.

It was far otherwise with the major's wife. The chance which her husband had entirely overlooked, that the new governess who was to come might be a younger and a more attractive woman than the old governess who had gone, was the first chance that presented itself as possible to Mrs. Milroy's mind. She had said nothing. Secretly waiting, and secretly nursing her inveterate distrust, she had encouraged her husband and her daughter to leave her on the occasion of the picnic, with the express purpose of making an opportunity for seeing the new governess alone. The governess had shown herself; and the smouldering fire of Mrs. Milroy's jealousy had burst into flame, in the moment when she and the handsome stranger first set eyes on each other.

The interview over, Mrs. Milroy's suspicions fastened at once and immovably on her husband's mother. She was well aware that there was no one else in London on whom the major could depend to make the necessary inquiries; she was well aware that Miss Gwilt had applied for the situation, in the first instance, as a stranger answering an advertisement published in a newspaper. Yet knowing this, she had obstinately closed her eyes, with the blind frenzy of the blindest of all the passions, to the facts straight before her; and, looking back to the last of many quarrels between them which had ended in separating the elder lady and herself, had seized on the conclusion that Miss Gwilt's engagement was due to her mother-in-law's vindictive enjoyment of making mischief in her household. The inference which the very servants themselves, witnesses of the family scandal, had correctly drawn—that the major's mother, in securing the services of a well-recommended governess for her son, had

thought it no part of her duty to consider that governess's looks in the purely fanciful interests of the major's wife—was an inference which it was simply impossible to convey into Mrs. Milroy's mind. The resolution which her jealousy of her husband would, in any case, have led her to take after seeing Miss Gwilt, was a resolution doubly confirmed by the conviction that now possessed her. Miss Gwilt had barely closed the sick-room door when the whispered words hissed out of Mrs. Milroy's lips, "Before another week is over your head, my lady, you go!"

From that moment, through the wakeful night and the weary day, the one object of the bedridden woman's life was to procure the new governess's dismissal from the house.

The assistance of the nurse, in the capacity of spy, was secured—as Mrs. Milroy had been accustomed to secure other extra services which her attendant was not bound to render her—by a present of a dress from the mistress's wardrobe. One after another, articles of wearing apparel which were now useless to Mrs. Milroy, had ministered in this way to feed the nurse's greed—the insatiable greed of an ugly woman for fine clothes. Bribed with the smartest dresses she had secured yet, the household spy took her secret orders, and applied herself with a vile enjoyment of it to her secret work.

The days passed, the work went on—but nothing came of it. Mistress and servant had a woman to deal with who was a match for both of them. Repeated intrusions on the major, when the governess happened to be in the same room with him, failed to discover the slightest impropriety of word, look, or action, on either side. Stealthy watching and listening at the governess's bedroom door, detected that she kept a light in her room at late hours of the night, and that she groaned and ground her teeth in her sleep—and detected nothing more. Careful superintendence in the day-time, proved that she regularly posted her own letters, instead of giving them to the servant; and that on certain occasions when the occupation of her hours out of lesson-time and walking-time was left at her own disposal, she had been suddenly missed from the garden, and then caught coming back alone to it from the park. Once, and once only, the nurse had found an opportunity of following her out of the garden—had been detected immediately in the park—and had been asked with the most exasperating politeness, if she wished to join Miss Gwilt in a walk. Small circumstances of this kind, which were sufficiently suspicious to the mind of a jealous woman, were discovered in abundance. But circumstances, on which to found a valid ground of complaint that might be laid before the major, proved to be utterly wanting. Day followed day, and Miss Gwilt remained persistently correct in her conduct, and persistently irreproachable in her relations towards her employer and her pupil.

Foiled in this direction, Mrs. Milroy tried next to find an assailable place in the statement which the governess's reference had made on the subject of the governess's character.

Obtaining from the major the minutely careful report which his mother

had addressed to him on this topic, Mrs. Milroy read and re-read it, and failed to find the weak point of which she was in search in any part of the letter. All the customary questions on such occasions had been asked, and all had been scrupulously and plainly answered. The one sole opening for an attack which it was possible to discover, was an opening which showed itself, after more practical matters had been all disposed of, in the closing sentences of the letter.

"I was so struck" (the passage ran) "by the grace and distinction of Miss Gwilt's manners, that I took an opportunity, when she was out of the room, of asking how she first came to be a governess. 'In the usual way,' I was told. 'A sad family misfortune, in which she behaved nobly. She is a very sensitive person, and shrinks from speaking of it among strangers—a natural reluctance which I have always felt it a matter of delicacy to respect.' Hearing this, of course I felt the same delicacy on my side. It was no part of my duty to intrude on the poor thing's private sorrows; my only business was to do, what I have now done, to make sure that I was engaging a capable and respectable governess to instruct my grandchild."

After careful consideration of these lines, Mrs. Milroy having a strong desire to find the circumstances suspicious, found them suspicious accordingly. She determined to sift the mystery of Miss Gwilt's family misfortunes to the bottom, on the chance of extracting from it something useful to her purpose. There were two ways of doing this. She might begin by questioning the governess herself, or she might begin by questioning the governess's reference. Experience of Miss Gwilt's quickness of resource in dealing with awkward questions at their introductory interview, decided her on taking the latter course. "I'll get the particulars from the reference first," thought Mrs. Milroy, "and then question the creature herself, and see if the two stories agree."

The letter of inquiry was short and scrupulously to the point. Mrs. Milroy began by informing her correspondent that the state of her health necessitated leaving her daughter entirely under the governess's influence and control. On that account she was more anxious than most mothers to be thoroughly informed in every respect about the person to whom she confided the entire charge of an only child; and, feeling this anxiety, she might perhaps be excused for putting what might be thought, after the excellent character Miss Gwilt had received, a somewhat unnecessary question. With that preface, Mrs. Milroy came to the point, and requested to be informed of the circumstances which had obliged Miss Gwilt to go out as a governess.

The letter, expressed in these terms, was posted the same day. On the morning when the answer was due, no answer appeared. The next morning arrived, and still there was no reply. When the third morning came, Mrs. Milroy's impatience had broken loose from all restraint. She had rung for the nurse in the manner which has been already recorded, and had ordered the woman to be in waiting to receive the letters of the

morning with her own hands. In this position matters now stood ; and in these domestic circumstances the new series of events at Thorpe-Ambrose took their rise.

Mrs. Milroy had just looked at her watch, and had just put her hand once more to the bell-pull, when the door opened and the nurse entered the room.

"Has the postman come?" asked Mrs. Milroy.

The nurse laid a letter on the bed without answering, and waited, with unconcealed curiosity, to watch the effect which it produced on her mistress.

Mrs. Milroy tore open the envelope the instant it was in her hand. A printed paper appeared (which she threw aside), surrounding a letter (which she looked at) in her own handwriting! She snatched up the printed paper. It was the customary Post-Office circular, informing her that her letter had been duly presented at the right address, and that the person whom she had written to was not to be found.

"Something wrong?" asked the nurse, detecting a change in her mistress's face.

The question passed unheeded. Mrs. Milroy's writing-desk was on the table at the bedside. She took from it the letter which the major's mother had written to her son, and turned to the page containing the name and address of Miss Gwilt's reference. "Mrs. Mandeville, 18, Kingsdown Crescent, Bayswater," she read eagerly to herself, and then looked at the address on her own returned letter. No error had been committed: the directions were identically the same.

"Something wrong?" reiterated the nurse, advancing a step nearer to the bed.

"Thank God—yes!" cried Mrs. Milroy, with a sudden outburst of exultation. She tossed the Post-Office circular to the nurse, and beat her bony hands on the bed-clothes, in an ecstasy of anticipated triumph. "Miss Gwilt's an impostor! Miss Gwilt's an impostor! If I die for it, Rachel, I'll be carried to the window to see the police take her away!"

"It's one thing to say she's an impostor behind her back, and another thing to prove it to her face," remarked the nurse. She put her hand as she spoke into her apron pocket, and, with a significant look at her mistress, silently produced a second letter.

"For me?" asked Mrs. Milroy.

"No," said the nurse, "for Miss Gwilt."

The two women eyed each other, and understood each other without another word.

"Where is she?" said Mrs. Milroy.

The nurse pointed in the direction of the park. "Out again, for another walk before breakfast—by herself."

Mrs. Milroy beckoned to the nurse to stoop close over her. "Can you open it, Rachel?" she whispered.

Rachel nodded.

"Can you close it again, so that nobody would know?"

"Can you spare the scarf that matches your pearl-grey dress?" asked Rachel.

"Take it!" said Mrs. Milroy, impatiently.

The nurse opened the wardrobe in silence; took the scarf in silence; and left the room in silence. In less than five minutes she came back with the envelope of Miss Gwilt's letter open in her hand.

"Thank you, ma'am, for the scarf," said Rachel, putting the opened letter composedly on the counterpane of the bed.

Mrs. Milroy looked at the envelope. It had been closed as usual by means of adhesive gum, which had been made to give way by the application of steam. As Mrs. Milroy took out the letter, her hand trembled violently, and the white enamel parted into cracks over the wrinkles on her forehead. "My drops," she said. "I'm dreadfully excited, Rachel. My drops!"

Rachel produced the drops, and then went to the window to keep watch on the park. "Don't hurry," she said. "No signs of her yet."

Mrs. Milroy still paused, keeping the all-important morsel of paper folded in her hand. She could have taken Miss Gwilt's life—but she hesitated at reading Miss Gwilt's letter.

"Are you troubled with scruples?" asked the nurse, with a sneer. "Consider it a duty you owe to your daughter."

"You wretch!" said Mrs. Milroy. With that expression of opinion, she opened the letter.

It was evidently written in great haste—was undated—and was signed in initials only. Thus it ran:—

"Diana Street.

"MY DEAR LYDIA,—The cab is waiting at the door, and I have only a moment to tell you that I am obliged to leave London, on business, for three or four days, or a week at longest. My letters will be forwarded if you write. I got yours yesterday, and I agree with you that it is very important to put him off the awkward subject of yourself and your family as long as you safely can. The better you know him, the better you will be able to make up the sort of story that will do. Once told, you will have to stick to it—and, *having* to stick to it, beware of making it complicated, and beware of making it in a hurry. I will write again about this, and give you my own ideas. In the meantime, don't risk meeting him too often in the park.—Yours, M. O."

"Well?" asked the nurse, returning to the bedside. "Have you done with it?"

"Meeting him in the park?" repeated Mrs. Milroy, with her eyes still fastened on the letter. "Him! Rachel, where is the major?"

"In his own room."

"I don't believe it!"

"Have your own way. I want the letter and the envelope."

"Can you close it again so that she won't know?"

"What I can open I can shut. Anything more?"

"Nothing more."

Mrs. Milroy was left alone again, to review her plan of attack by the new light that had now been thrown on Miss Gwilt.

The information that had been gained, by opening the governess's letter, pointed plainly to the conclusion that an adventuress had stolen her way into the house by means of a false reference. But having been obtained by an act of treachery which it was impossible to acknowledge, it was not information that could be used either for warning the major or for exposing Miss Gwilt. The one available weapon in Mrs. Milroy's hands was the weapon furnished by her own returned letter—and the one question to decide was how to make the best and speediest use of it.

The longer she turned the matter over in her mind, the more hasty and premature seemed the exultation which she had felt at the first sight of the Post-Office circular. That a lady acting as reference to a governess should have quitted her residence without leaving any trace behind her, and without even mentioning an address to which her letters could be forwarded, was a circumstance in itself sufficiently suspicious to be mentioned to the major. But Mrs. Milroy, however perverted her estimate of her husband might be in some respects, knew enough of his character to be assured that, if she told him what had happened, he would frankly appeal to the governess herself for an explanation. Miss Gwilt's quickness and cunning would, in that case, produce some plausible answer on the spot, which the major's partiality would be only too ready to accept; and she would at the same time, no doubt, place matters in train, by means of the post, for the due arrival of all needful confirmation on the part of her accomplice in London. To keep strict silence for the present, and to institute (without the governess's knowledge) such inquiries as might be necessary to the discovery of undeniable evidence, was plainly the only safe course to take with such a man as the major, and with such a woman as Miss Gwilt. Helpless herself, to whom could Mrs. Milroy commit the difficult and dangerous task of investigation? The nurse, even if she was to be trusted, could not be spared at a day's notice, and could not be sent away without the risk of exciting remark. Was there any other competent and reliable person to employ, either at Thorpe-Ambrose or in London? Mrs. Milroy turned from side to side of the bed, searching every corner of her mind for the needful discovery, and searching in vain. "Oh, if I could only lay my hand on some man I could trust!" she thought, despairingly. "If I only knew where to look for somebody to help me!"

As the idea passed through her mind, the sound of her daughter's voice startled her from the other side of the door.

"May I come in?" asked Neelie.

"What do you want?" returned Mrs. Milroy, impatiently.

"I have brought up your breakfast, mamma."

"My breakfast?" repeated Mrs. Milroy, in surprise. "Why doesn't Rachel bring it up as usual?" She considered a moment, and then called out sharply, "Come in!"

CHAPTER II.

THE MAN IS FOUND.

NEELIE entered the room, carrying the tray with the tea, the dry toast, and the pat of butter which composed the invalid's invariable breakfast.

"What does this mean?" asked Mrs. Milroy, speaking and looking as she might have spoken and looked if the wrong servant had come into the room.

Noelie put the tray down on the bedside table. "I thought I should like to bring you up your breakfast, mamma, for once in a way," she replied, "and I asked Rachel to let me."

"Come here," said Mrs. Milroy, "and wish me good-morning."

Noelie obeyed. As she stooped to kiss her mother, Mrs. Milroy caught her by the arm, and turned her roughly to the light. There were plain signs of disturbance and distress in her daughter's face. A deadly thrill of terror ran through Mrs. Milroy on the instant. She suspected that the opening of the letter had been discovered by Miss Gwilt, and that the nurse was keeping out of the way in consequence.

"Let me go, mamma," said Noelie, shrinking under her mother's grasp. "You hurt me."

"Tell me why you have brought up my breakfast this morning," persisted Mrs. Milroy.

"I have told you, mamma."

"You have *not*! You have made an excuse—I see it in your face. Come! what is it?"

Noelie's resolution gave way before her mother's. She looked aside uneasily at the things in the tray. "I have been vexed," she said with an effort; "and I didn't want to stop in the breakfast-room. I wanted to come up here, and speak to you."

"Vexed? Who has vexed you? What has happened? Has Miss Gwilt anything to do with it?"

Noelie looked round again at her mother in sudden curiosity and alarm. "Mamma!" she said, "you read my thoughts—I declare you frighten me. It *was* Miss Gwilt."

Before Mrs. Milroy could say a word more on her side, the door opened, and the nurse looked in.

"Have you got what you want?" she asked as composedly as usual. "Miss, there, insisted on taking your tray up this morning. Has she broken anything?"

"Go to the window—I want to speak to Rachel," said Mrs. Milroy.

As soon as her daughter's back was turned, she beckoned eagerly to the nurse. "Anything wrong?" she asked in a whisper. "Do you think she suspects us?"

The nurse turned away, with her hard sneering smile. "I told you it should be done," she said, "and it *has* been done. She hasn't the ghost of a suspicion. I waited in the room—and I saw her take up the letter, and open it."

Mrs. Milroy drew a deep breath of relief. "Thank you," she said, loud enough for her daughter to hear. "I want nothing more."

The nurse withdrew; and Neelie came back from the window. Mrs. Milroy took her by the hand, and looked at her more attentively and more kindly than usual. Her daughter interested her that morning—for her daughter had something to say on the subject of Miss Gwilt.

"I used to think you promised to be pretty, child," she said, cautiously resuming the interrupted conversation in the least direct way. "But you don't seem to be keeping your promise. You look out of health and out of spirits—what is the matter with you?"

If there had been any sympathy between mother and child, Neelie might have owned the truth. She might have said frankly, "I am looking ill, because my life is miserable to me. I am fond of Mr. Armadale, and Mr. Armadale was once fond of me. We had one little disagreement, only one, in which I was to blame. I wanted to tell him so at the time, and I have wanted to tell him so ever since—and Miss Gwilt stands between us and prevents me. She has made us like strangers; she has altered him, and taken him away from me. He doesn't look at me as he did; he doesn't speak to me as he did; he is never alone with me as he used to be; I can't say the words to him that I long to say; and I can't write to him, for it would look as if I wanted to get him back. It is all over between me and Mr. Armadale,—and it is that woman's fault. There is ill-blood between Miss Gwilt and me the whole day long; and say what I may, and do what I may, she always gets the better of me, and always puts me in the wrong. Everything I saw at Thorpe-Ambrose pleased me, everything I did at Thorpe-Ambrose made me happy, before she came. Nothing pleases me, and nothing makes me happy now!" If Neelie had ever been accustomed to ask her mother's advice and to trust herself to her mother's love, she might have said such words as these. As it was, the tears came into her eyes, and she hung her head in silence.

"Come!" said Mrs. Milroy, beginning to lose patience. "You have something to say to me about Miss Gwilt. What is it?"

Neelie forced back the tears, and made an effort to answer.

"She aggravates me beyond endurance, mamma; I can't bear her; I shall do something——" Neelie stopped, and stamped her foot angrily on the floor. "I shall throw something at her head, if we go on much longer like this! I should have thrown something this morning if I hadn't left the room. Oh, do speak to papa about it! do find out some reason for

sending her away! I'll go to school—I'll do anything in the world to get rid of Miss Gwilt!"

To get rid of Miss Gwilt! At those words—at that echo from her daughter's lips of the one dominant desire kept secret in her own heart—Mrs. Milroy's only raised herself in the bed. What did it mean? Was the help she wanted coming from the very last of all quarters in which she could have thought of looking for it?

"Why do you want to get rid of Miss Gwilt," she asked. "What have you got to complain of?"

"Nothing!" said Neelie. "That's the aggravation of it. Miss Gwilt won't let me have anything to complain of. She is perfectly detestable; she is driving me mad; and she is the pink of propriety all the time. I daresay it's wrong, but, I don't care—I hate her!"

Mrs. Milroy's eyes questioned her daughter's face as they had never questioned it yet. There was something under the surface, evidently—something which it might be of vital importance to her own purpose to discover—which had not risen into view. She went on probing her way gently deeper and deeper into Neelie's mind, with a warmer and warmer interest in Neelie's secret.

"Pour me out a cup of tea," she said; "and don't excite yourself, my dear. Why do you speak to *me* about this? why don't you speak to your father?"

"I have tried to speak to papa," said Neelie. "But it is no use; he is too good to know what a wretch she is. She is always on her best behaviour with him; she is always contriving to be useful to him. I can't make him understand why I dislike Miss Gwilt—I can't make *you* understand—I only understand it myself." She tried to pour out the tea, and in trying upset the cup. "I'll go downstairs again!" exclaimed Neelie, with a burst of tears. "I'm not fit for anything—I can't even pour out a cup of tea!"

Mrs. Milroy seized her hand, and stopped her. Trifling as it was, Neelie's reference to the relations between the major and Miss Gwilt had roused her mother's ready jealousy. The restraints which Mrs. Milroy had laid on herself thus far, vanished in a moment—vanished, even in the presence of a girl of sixteen, and that girl her own child!

"Wait here!" she said, eagerly. "You have come to the right place and the right person. Go on abusing Miss Gwilt. I like to hear you—I hate her too!"

"You, mamma!" exclaimed Neelie, looking at her mother in astonishment.

For a moment, Mrs. Milroy hesitated before she said more. Some last-left instinct of her married life in its earlier and happier time, pleaded hard with her to respect the youth and the sex of her child. But jealousy respects nothing; in the heaven above and on the earth beneath, nothing but itself. The slow fire of self-torment burning night and day in the miserable woman's breast, flashed its deadly light into

her eyes, as the next words dropped slowly and venomously from her lips.

"If you had had eyes in your head you would never have gone to your father," she said. "Your father has reasons of his own for hearing nothing that you can say, or that anybody can say, against Miss Gwilt."

Many girls at Neelie's age would have failed to see the meaning hidden under those words. It was the daughter's misfortune, in this instance, to have had experience enough of the mother to understand her. Neelie started back from the bedside, with her face in a glow. "Mamma!" she said, "you are talking horribly! Papa is the best and dearest and kindest—oh, I won't hear it!—I won't hear it!"

Mrs. Milroy's fierce temper broke out in an instant—broke out all the more violently from her feeling herself, in spite of herself, to have been in the wrong.

"You impudent little fool!" she retorted furiously, "do you think I want *you* to remind me of what I owe to your father? Am I to learn how to speak of your father, and how to think of your father, and how to love and honour your father, from a forward little minx like you! I was finely disappointed, I can tell you, when you were born—I wished for a boy, you impudent hussy! If you ever find a man who is fool enough to marry you, he will be a lucky man if you only love him half as well, a quarter as well, a hundred-thousandth part as well, as I loved your father. Ah, you can cry when it's too late; you can come creeping back to beg your mother's pardon after you have insulted her. You little dowdy, half-grown creature! I was handsomer than ever you will be when I married your father—I would have gone through fire and water to serve your father! If he had asked me to cut off one of my arms, I would have done it—I would have done it to please him!" She turned suddenly with her face to the wall—forgetting her daughter, forgetting her husband, forgetting everything but the torturing remembrance of her lost beauty. "My arms!" she repeated to herself, faintly. "What arms I had when I was young!" She snatched up the sleeve of her dressing-gown furtively, with a shudder. "Oh, look at it now! look at it now!"

Neelie fell on her knees at the bedside, and hid her face. In sheer despair of finding comfort and help anywhere else, she had cast herself impulsively on her mother's mercy—and this was how it had ended! "Oh, mamma," she pleaded, "you know I didn't mean to offend you! I couldn't help it when you spoke so of my father. Oh, do, do, forgive me."

Mrs. Milroy turned again on her pillow, and looked at her daughter vacantly. "Forgive you?" she repeated, with her mind still in the past, groping its way back darkly to the present.

"I beg your pardon, mamma—I beg your pardon on my knees. I am so unhappy; I do so want a little kindness! Won't you forgive me?"

"Wait a little," rejoined Mrs. Milroy. "Ah," she said, after an interval, "now I know! Forgive you? Yes—I'll forgive you on one

condition." She lifted Neelie's head, and looked her searchingly in the face. "Tell me why you hate Miss Gwilt! You've a reason of your own for hating her, and you haven't confessed it yet."

Neelie's head dropped again. The burning colour that she was hiding by hiding her face, showed itself on her neck. Her mother saw it, and gave her time.

"Tell me," reiterated Mrs. Milroy, more gently, "why do you hate her?"

The answer came reluctantly, a word at a time, in fragments.

"Because she is trying——"

"Trying what?"

"Trying to make somebody who is much——"

"Much what?"

"Much too young for her——"

"Marry her?"

"Yes, mamma."

Breathlessly interested, Mrs. Milroy leaned forward, and twined her hand caressingly in her daughter's hair.

"Who is it, Neelie?" she asked, in a whisper.

"You will never say I told you, mamma?"

"Never! Who is it?"

"Mr. Armadale."

Mrs. Milroy leaned back on her pillow in dead silence. The plain betrayal of her daughter's first love, by her daughter's own lips, which would have absorbed the whole attention of other mothers, failed to occupy her for a moment. Her jealousy, distorting all things to fit its own conclusions, was busied in distorting what she had just heard. "A blind," she thought, "which has deceived my girl. It doesn't deceive me. Is Miss Gwilt likely to succeed?" she asked aloud. "Does Mr. Armadale show any sort of interest in her?"

Neelie looked up at her mother for the first time. The hardest part of the confession was over now—she had revealed the truth about Miss Gwilt, and she had openly mentioned Allan's name.

"He shows the most unaccountable interest," she said. "It's impossible to understand it. It's downright infatuation—I haven't patience to talk about it!"

"How do you come to be in Mr. Armadale's secrets?" inquired Mrs. Milroy. "Has he informed you, of all the people in the world, of his interest in Miss Gwilt?"

"Me!" exclaimed Neelie, indignantly. "It's quite bad enough that he should have told papa."

At the reappearance of the major in the narrative, Mrs. Milroy's interest in the conversation rose to its climax. She raised herself again from the pillow. "Get a chair," she said. "Sit down, child, and tell me all about it. Every word, mind—every word!"

"I can only tell you, mamma, what papa told me."

"When?"

"Saturday. I went in with papa's lunch to the workshop, and he said, 'I have just had a visit from Mr. Armadale; and I want to give you a caution, while I think of it.' I didn't say anything, mamma—I only waited. Papa went on, and told me that Mr. Armadale had been speaking to him on the subject of Miss Gwilt, and that he had been asking a question about her which nobody in his position had a right to ask. Papa said he had been obliged, good-humouredly, to warn Mr. Armadale to be a little more delicate, and a little more careful next time. I didn't feel much interested, mamma—it didn't matter to me what Mr. Armadale said or did. Why should I care about it?"

"Never mind yourself," interposed Mrs. Milroy, sharply. "Go on with what your father said. What was he doing when he was talking about Miss Gwilt? How did he look?"

"Much as usual, mamma. He was walking up and down the workshop; and I took his arm and walked up and down with him."

"I don't care what you were doing," said Mrs. Milroy, more and more irritably. "Did your father tell you what Mr. Armadale's question was—or did he not?"

"Yes, mamma. He said Mr. Armadale began by mentioning that he was very much interested in Miss Gwilt, and he then went on to ask whether papa could tell him anything about her family misfortunes——"

"What!!!" cried Mrs. Milroy. The word burst from her almost in a scream, and the white enamel on her face cracked in all directions. "Mr. Armadale said *that*?" she went on, leaning out farther and farther over the side of the bed.

Neelie started up, and tried to put her mother back on the pillow.

"Mamma!" she exclaimed, "are you in pain? are you ill? You frighten me!"

"Nothing, nothing, nothing," said Mrs. Milroy. She was too violently agitated to make any other than the commonest excuse. "My nerves are bad this morning—don't notice it. I'll try the other side of the pillow. Go on! go on! I'm listening, though I'm not looking at you." She turned her face to the wall, and clenched her trembling hands convulsively beneath the bed-clothes. "I've got her!" she whispered to herself, under her breath. "I've got her at last!"

"I'm afraid I've been talking too much," said Neelie; "I'm afraid I've been stopping here too long. Shall I go downstairs, mamma, and come back later in the day?"

"Go on," repeated Mrs. Milroy, mechanically. "What did your father say next? Anything more about Mr. Armadale?"

"Nothing more, except how papa answered him," replied Neelie. "Papa repeated his own words when he told me about it. He said, 'In the absence of any confidence volunteered by the lady herself, Mr. Armadale, all I know or wish to know—and you must excuse me for saying, all any one else need know or wish to know—is, that Miss Gwilt

gave me a perfectly satisfactory reference before she entered my house.' Severe, mamma, wasn't it? I don't pity him in the least—he richly deserved it. The next thing was papa's caution to me. He told me to check Mr. Armadale's curiosity if he applied to me next. As if he was likely to apply to me! and as if I should listen to him if he did! That's all, mamma. You won't suppose, will you, that I have told you this because I want to hinder Mr. Armadale from marrying Miss Gwilt? Let him marry her if he pleases—I don't care!" said Neelie, in a voice that faltered a little, and with a face which was hardly composed enough to be in perfect harmony with a declaration of indifference. "All I want is to be relieved from the misery of having Miss Gwilt for my governess. I'd rather go to school. I should like to go to school. My mind's quite changed about all that—only I haven't the heart to tell papa. I don't know what's come to me—I don't seem to have heart enough for anything now—and when papa takes me on his knee in the evening, and says, 'Let's have a talk, Neelie,' he makes me cry. Would you mind breaking it to him, mamma, that I've changed my mind, and I want to go to school?" The tears rose thickly in her eyes, and she failed to see that her mother never even turned on the pillow to look round at her.

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Milroy, vacantly. "You're a good girl; you shall go to school."

The cruel brevity of the reply, and the tone in which it was spoken, told Neelie plainly that her mother's attention had been wandering far away from her, and that it was useless and needless to prolong the interview. She turned aside quietly, without a word of remonstrance. It was nothing new, in her experience, to find herself shut out from her mother's sympathies. She looked at her eyes in the glass, and, pouring out some cold water, bathed her face. "Miss Gwilt shan't see I've been crying!" thought Neelie, as she went back to the bedside to take her leave. "I've tired you out, mamma," she said gently. "Let me go now; and let me come back a little later when you have had some rest."

"Yes," repeated her mother, as mechanically as ever; "a little later, when I have had some rest."

Neelie left the room. The minute after the door had closed on her, Mrs. Milroy rang the bell for her nurse. In the face of the narrative she had just heard, in the face of every reasonable estimate of probabilities, she held to her own jealous conclusions as firmly as ever. "Mr. Armadale may believe her, and my daughter may believe her," thought the furious woman. "But I know the major—and she can't deceive me!"

The nurse came in. "Prop me up," said Mrs. Milroy. "And give me my desk. I want to write."

"You're excited," replied the nurse. "You're not fit to write."

"Give me the desk," reiterated Mrs. Milroy.

"Anything more?" asked Rachel, repeating her invariable formula as she placed the desk on the bed.

"Yes. Come back in half-an-hour. I shall want you to take a letter to the great house."

The nurse's sardonic composure deserted her for once. "Mercy on us!" she exclaimed, with an accent of genuine surprise. "What next? You don't mean to say you're going to write ——?"

"I am going to write to Mr. Armadale," interposed Mrs. Milroy; "and you are going to take the letter to him, and wait for an answer—and, mind this, not a living soul but our two selves must know of it in the house."

"Why are you writing to Mr. Armadale?" asked Rachel. "And why is nobody to know of it but our two selves?"

"Wait," rejoined Mrs. Milroy; "and you will see."

The nurse's curiosity, being a woman's curiosity, declined to wait.

"I'll help you, with my eyes open," she said. "But I won't help you blindfold."

"Oh, if I only had the use of my limbs!" groaned Mrs. Milroy. "You wretch, if I could only do without you!"

"You have the use of your head," retorted the impenetrable nurse. "And you ought to know better than to trust me by halves, at this time of day."

It was brutally put; but it was true—doubly true, after the opening of Miss Gwilt's letter. Mrs. Milroy gave way.

"What do you want to know?" she asked. "Tell me—and leave me."

"I want to know what you are writing to Mr. Armadale about?"

"About Miss Gwilt."

"What has Mr. Armadale to do with you and Miss Gwilt?"

Mrs. Milroy held up the letter which had been returned to her by the authorities at the Post-Office.

"Stoop," she said. "Miss Gwilt may be listening at the door. I'll whisper."

The nurse stooped, with her eye on the door.

"You know that the postman went with this letter to Kingsdown Crescent?" said Mrs. Milroy. "And you know that he found Mrs. Mandeville gone away, nobody could tell where?"

"Well," whispered Rachel, "what next?"

"This, next. When Mr. Armadale gets the letter that I am going to write to him, he will follow the same road as the postman—and we'll see what happens when he knocks at Mrs. Mandeville's door."

"How do you get him to the door?"

"I tell him to go to Miss Gwilt's reference."

"Is he sweet on Miss Gwilt?"

"Yes."

"Ah!" said the nurse. "I see!"

To Homburg and Back for a Shilling.

THE map of Central Germany is as bewildering a puzzle as Bradshaw guide. A chart on any reasonable scale presents the appearance of being nearly all frontier with very little interior, like a farm all hedgerows. To the general run of tourists, it does not signify greatly whether their conveyance is passing through Baden or Nassau; whether they are eating their sandwich during the train's delay in Hesse-Darmstadt or Hesse Cassel; certain it is they will seldom know. The natives themselves have long since given up the attempt to distinguish localities.

The Irishman who discovered the sausage on his road to market, reconciled himself to eating it by declaring "it was all meat anyhow," and a bewildered traveller in the land of principalities and powers may console himself with something of the same sort—"It is all Germany anyhow." One day or night, however, good reader, when some half-hour of your life seems to have lost its value and its wings, open a map of Germany, and explore it until you discover a section of it bearing the name Hesse-Homburg: it is a Landgravate as I daresay you know, and its capital is Homburg!

There and back for a shilling, by the aerial machine plying between Cornhill and all parts of the globe is surely reasonable, and if this mode of conveyance precludes your taking a draught of the very nasty waters—which are certainly not those of Lethe, since once tasted, one never forgets—it spares you the risk of drawing a draft of another kind.

On the supposition, then, that you are seated in the cloud-cleaver, with your humble servant at the helm, farewell Cornhill, and presto! hail Hesse-Homburg!

Microscopic dominion with a huge plague in thee!—gnat's eye, with a prodigious beam in thee!—the sunshine seems to linger lovingly over thy hilly woodlands, and Nature to turn her sweet calm face upwards for the crimson-dyed sunset to tinge with its warm glow. Alas, perhaps it is to blush for the bad ends her beauty has been made to serve. The thrush throbs out its song, and the black-bird chatters out its startled notes; but human ears, when their owners bring them to Homburg, find more music in the rasping of the roulette-table, and the chink of gold, each coin of which is damp with the sweat of avarice's crooked fingers. Caustic to a festering sore, reprobation to a moral ulcer, and may success wait on the physician!

Shabby and uninteresting is the town of Homburg, with its plethora of hotels and Brummagem-jewellers' shops, to be compared not inaptly to a nut, of which the Casino is the kernel—the shell worthless, and the

fruit unwholesome. Anomalous in every condition of its existence, the *Kursaal*, or Casino, is not supported by the town, but supports it. The sovereign is not its patron, but its dependant. Poor old Landgrave! the hundred thousand florins "*la Direction*" pays you, leaves you poor indeed, for it robs your poverty of its respectability.

If extremes meet anywhere, it is at such places as this that the point of contact may be looked for. Your tailor or your sovereign—it is a toss-up which you stumble upon while you take your morning ramble. Society sends samples of all her products to the exhibition temples of Mammon. The rustling silks of Kensington Gardens by day, and the rustling silks of the Haymarket by night, mingle their folds around the gaming-tables. A Montmorency handles the rake turnabout with a late hotel-waiter, who levanted with the money he is now losing at roulette.

Does the expression "lights and shades of life" mean anything that prose can handle? if so, it is at Homburg that they force themselves upon our notice, but so blended that the light partakes of shadow, and the shade of a sort of meretricious glitter, peculiar to that lofty spacious temple reared to Dives, which seems to echo every sound within its walls except a laugh, and its mirrors to reflect each thing and sign except a smile.

To abandon generalities, however, let us take our stand upon the stone terrace in the rear of the Homburg Casino, and observe.

What is going on in the green space below you? Foot-ball; and that accurately dressed dandy has inadroitly "slipped" the ball on to the parasols of that coterie of elderly ladies occupying the bench near the kiosk. How disgusted they look; and he, the sinner, how disconcerted! The ill-directed ball is lost among the mysteries of crinoline and muslin, and will not stir unless the ladies do, and they will not. Lavender kid gloves and patent leather boots for football! Serve you right, Sir Dandy! *Ne bougez pas, mes dames!*

And who have we here, with festooned skirt, displaying a hand-breadth of embroidered whiteness beneath, and a foot that scarce would crush a butterfly; and one, two—five little dogs—fluffiest of Maltese, and puggiest of pugs? That group of pretty children is more charmed with the small quadrupeds than their mistress with the toddling bipeds. Nay, madam, there was no need to call your curly favourite so crossly from the child's caress. A farthing for your heart! Fair are the features your lace fall shrouds, graceful and womanly your step and bearing. Pass on; that knot of mustachioed men yonder, under the trees, will pat your pets unchidden.

That smoke rising among the branches of the linden, curling away into space, is only tobacco-smoke apparently; but if our sight could separate the visible from the invisible, we should behold the sigh that escaped with that puff of smoke. Examine the smoker—a man of thought originally, if physiognomy be not an utter sham. His cold eye rests on the ball-players, but does not see them; his fingers tap the bench, in cadence to the music, but he does not hear it; he draws a ring from his

finger and examines it. Then he rises, and after walking once or twice to and fro before the bench with eyes fixed on the ground, quits the gardens briskly. If we follow we shall observe him disappear in a building immediately opposite the side entrance to the Casino, on the front of which is painted in large characters "Mont de Piété."

Why do not our pawnbrokers take a hint from their Continental co-fraternity? *They* make clean the outside of the platter at all events, by assuming a name suggestive of meekness and charity. The three balls have become odious: a picture of the Good Samaritan might be recommended in its stead. Our smoker wears gloves when he leaves the establishment, thinking every one would notice the absence of the diamond from his finger; his coat, too, is buttoned, lest spectators should observe where his watchguard is *not*, and guess where it *is*.

Now, the swinging portals of the Casino give him admittance, and in an hour, perhaps, he will resume his seat on the bench where we first saw him, listless and moody, with the dark ring darker round his eyes.

These desultory and unfilled-in outlines might be multiplied indefinitely from the twenty thousand strangers, or thereabout, that throng Homburg during the summer season, but they are figures in the background, and no more. Taste and ingenuity are abundantly evident in the arrangement of the spacious gardens and pleasure-grounds, wherein, if so disposed, you may find the "Drink-halle." Walks serpentine through fragrant hedges and avenues; green lawns inviting trespassing feet to a nearer inspection of flower-borders gorgeous with many-coloured blossoms; elegantly light pavilions draped with caressing creepers, form a scene fitly peopled by the well-dressed crowds who lounge away the mornings in its midst. Take one good look, then, at the landscape far and near, and own it beautiful; rich in the distant wooded slopes of variegated greens—in valleys wherein are hamlets half-hidden. It is the beauty of nature and innocence. Turn now and see the beauty of human art, and the allurements of what is exceedingly like vice. Are you wondering to see that company of men issue from the Casino, shooting-coated, gunned, and belted? Marvel no more; the sporting over woods and plains belongs to Monsieur Blanc and "la Direction." So you may weary out your legs in the green woods by day, killing hares and pheasants for the restaurant, if you will rest them at night beneath the green-clothed tables. Guns and dogs too are at the disposal of who will, and if the former burst occasionally, and the latter have but hazy notions of the distinction between rat and hare, or pheasant and hedge-sparrow, these details do not obtrude themselves in the paragraph dedicated to the sporting item of the director's programme.

Let us enter. The glass-doors by which we pass from the terrace admit to the concert-room. Cool is the marble-floor, pleasant the walls in tinted arabesque, on which fall bright rays of light through the cupola above. Would you rest? soft couches fill the niches in the walls. Would you read? pass through that door to the right, and you will find the press

of all the world ready to your hand. Look around you and admit that the stateliest of our Pall Mall club-houses scarcely equals this unrivalled "hell" in general plan or detail of decoration. There is no niggardly economy of space about those noble corridors whose massive columns, Gheysenaar's *chef d'œuvre*, may fairly claim to be the best bad thing of the century. Pace the front corridor, a promenade in itself—cool in summer, agreeably warm in winter—erring, if at all, in the too-fragrant exotics which avenue its lengths; and, when you have reached its left extremity, there are the willing doors which scarcely need a push to give you entrance to *the rooms*.

Many are the rooms in that gigantic swindle, but they have each a name, while these shrink from baptism: they are *the rooms*. Leave the doors closed, there are more outer courts of the temple to tread ere the iniquity of iniquities be entered. Retrace your steps to the other end of the corridor. If a cigar tempts you, ask a light of the smoker yonder in the white coat. A pleasant face under his white hat, eh? Fair, florid, blue-eyed, Saxon-looking. English, do you say? not a bit of it; German as the Drachenfels, and deeper than the Rhine at Bingen. Measure him from his well-made boots to his delicately-coloured neck-tie. Is there something of design in the widely thrown-back coat front? The waistcoat is spotlessly white, the watch-guard massive and the dangling pendants bulky. Is there purpose in the ungloved left hand? the diamond in the ring has certainly no flaw. His race has known how to distinguish pure stones and standard gold ever since it spoiled the Egyptians. He eyes you keenly—it is his business to scan faces and fathom pockets. But let us be just; the Homburg banker and money-lender loves gold without hating his fellow-creatures, and if he has many acceptances in his iron chest, he has a heart in his own. His mania is to collect autographs beneath "Orders to pay." Do you suppose he does not know that you had a chief interest in the two cargoes of cotton the lucky *Pursuivant* brought safely out of Wilmington last year? Pshaw, my dear sir, he has even calculated your profits, and is now calculating on your losses—at roulette. Well, if flies will dash into webs, spiders must eat them!

Here we are at the other end. Two hundred feet of tessellated marble pavement has brought us to the billiard-room. Where will you equal it? What could be more chastely correct than the tinting of ceiling and walls, or more original than the inlaying of the oaken flooring? The tables are models of carved work, the cues as bright as the marriage of rosewood and mother-of-pearl should be. Fingal might reflect himself in those mirrors from crown to toe without stooping, and on the velvet couches a Roberts might lounge and watch two ignorami knock the balls about, without losing his temper.

Hard by we have the restaurant, in every sense a banqueting-room. What of the *Maison Dorée* or the *Café Riche* after this Lucullusian hall? Autumn's self might have snatched his grape-leaf coronal from his brow, and wreathed it round that pile of pictured fruit—so real, so ripe it

looks, so fresh and soft the vine that wantons round it. Those flowers planted on the ceiling by the clever brush, seem about to drop their petals in one's plate: "Cotelette aux feuilles de rose"—print it, Maître Chevet, in your "Spesserkarten."

As a rule, the Germans do not know how or what to eat; their diet is only fit for Germans; but Chevet's art steers a nice mean between all the routes of cookery, and the god who made eating pleasant created Chevet as the equivoise to hunger. A sandwich, then, of brown bread and pâté de foie gras, diluted by a glass of Château d'Yquem, ere we pass to the right wing of the Casino. It is dedicated to the Muses—a theatre, limited in its dimensions, but nearly perfect in symmetry and arrangement. A good French company will enable you, on three days in each week, to persuade yourself that you are *not* at the Français, but the Variétés, or the Porte St. Martin.

So long as the multiplication of amusements can retain those who have the money to pay for them in Homburg, there is a chance of the fascination of play absorbing the hours of interval between pic-nics and concerts, balls and theatrical representations. The "Direction" base their proceedings upon this hypothesis; the value of the shares proves how solidly.

Listen to the music. How it seems to filter through every obstruction! If we go now to the concert-room we shall no longer find a vacant seat. We might, as we look into it, imagine the illustrated page of *Le Follet* had been suddenly vivified. Such natty little hats and loves of bonnets, adorned by faces pretty and expressive of "expressionlessness." Silks of peach-blossom hue that nothing more profane than the delicate glove that lifts it should touch. Butterflies of girls, half white, half rose or blue or green, sit in the sunny spots as butterflies should. Ah me! Maidens, take away your innocence. And you, respectable father of a family, did you bring your four bright young daughters here because your Badeker's guide told you that an evil thing flourished? Will you take them to the London Casino, or the Argyll Rooms? or is depravity become pure because it is in Germany? How do you know, sir, who that well-dressed man is, that you allow him to hold your pretty inexperienced girl's skein of silk? Very convenient to chat with somebody in English, and he seems a gentlemanlike person. Very good! if you *will* try the experiment of making acquaintances in Homburg and such places, try it in your own person. You may come to regret that in your purse—a grief you may forget: Homburg has led to others you could *not*.

Now let the sweeping trains of silk and lace dust us a path—we will follow. Who could not fix the habitat of that bevy of showy dames? the merest loungee at Tortoni's must get the type so stamped into his brain that nothing short of drowning could efface it. What is it that separates a Parisian woman from all other women? giving Mademoiselle Flore of the Quartier Bréda something of Versailles, and Madame la

Duchesse de Purnang something of the Quartier Bréda. You guess where they are going by the direction they take.

But we must not talk now, or whisper at most. Here, the croupiers have tongues, the multitude ears only. Respect for the sanctity of gold! the offerings of cupidity are piled on its altars, and from some hundreds of lungs the bated breath is rising—a fitting incense. How the feet sink into the pile of the rich carpet! But before you quarrel with the profusion of embellishment about you, examine the care that has been lavished on its smallest detail. Every cupid in those frescoes is a study—every tint of cloud and sea an artistic contrast. The gilded frames are enormous, but the mirrors are gigantic: see how large a space their fields reflect. Let your eyes wander over the enamelled mouldings and along the wreaths of flowers, among which enough of gilt is dashed to make one think of sunshine in a garden. Behold those silken hangings coquettishly relieved by laced edges drooping in rich cords of many-coloured strands, and those crimson velvet couches sedately contrasting with buhl and ormolu. Verily, great is the mystery of upholstery!

We are in the principal saloon; it is about one hundred feet by forty, and its two or three hundred occupants are divided into two groups, hiding the centres to which they gravitate. Approach and you will see in the midst of this first crowd a green-clothed board, not unlike a billiard-table without cushions, spaced by coloured lines—it is the *Trente et Quarante* table.

The individuals occupying raised seats on either side of the board, and supported right and left by another holding a short wooden rake, are the bankers and croupiers. In the centre of the table, equidistant from the respective trios, observe “the bank.” The amount displayed in coin and notes rises perhaps to a hundred thousand francs; allowing as much more to be apportioned to each of the other three tables, it gives a united capital of sixteen thousand pounds—a very tall candle too, to attract moths. The rouleaux of gold coin are neatly piled pyramidally as a centre, from which radiate star-like lines of five-franc pieces, thalers, and florins, ready to the “banker’s” hand.

The bank divides the table into halves, each of which is a copy of the other. A square space defined by red lines in the middle, a triangle at the head where sits a single croupier, and on either border a diamond, the one red, the other green like the cloth. You notice coin in various sums lying irregularly within the sections of the table. That inside the square is staked on *couleur*, within the triangle on *inverse*; that near the red diamond is on *la rouge*, all near the green diamond on *le noir*.

The croupier, with playing-cards in his hand, is calling the game; it is very simple. He turns, face uppermost, from the pack, card after card, until the number of the pips has passed thirty (*trente*)—the cards having their numerical value from one to ten, and each picture-card counting as ten likewise. He then stops and declares the sum total of the first line of cards—it is the declaration for *le noir*. Recommencing,

he turns a second line of cards from the pack, until their value reaches or passes thirty, when he again stops and calls their sum total—it is the declaration for la rouge. The least in number wins.

Thus the numbers always range between thirty and forty, hence the name *Trente et Quarante*. If you had staked on the noir, and the cards first turned formed in the aggregate the number thirty-three, while those turned in the second instance rose to thirty-four, you would win, because the cards first turned always form the number for the noir, and thirty-three is less than thirty-four. Again, if the first card of the first series be red, a heart or diamond, and the last of the last series also red, couleur wins and inverse loses, because there is coincidence of colour; but if the first card be red and the last black, or *vice versa*, inverse wins and couleur loses, because there is divergence of colour. You are at liberty to stake upon any one or two of the four places—rouge, noir, couleur, inverse.

Should the cards when turned present in each series a corresponding number, what is called a *refait* takes place. When the first turned card of the corresponding series is red, *refait* signifies that the deal counts for nothing; but when the first card is black, *color nefastus*, your stake is put in prison on the line that bounds the place whereon you staked, and if that place wins, you recover possession of your stake, but nothing more. Thus in each such instance the bank plays for your money without the possibility of losing its own. The *refait* is then the odds in favour of the bank, and as it frequently occurs there is no need for the cheating such as is often groundlessly attributed to the establishment. To cheat outside of the rules would be to kill the goose outright. Watch the banker's face while he fulfils his office. Note how the one-expressed eyes follow their changeless orbit, and the one-expressed voice intones the weary monotone—the croupier's shibboleth. "*Faites vos jeux, messieurs—vos jeux sont faits? rien ne va plus!*" The glass is typified in him. Watchful, patient, civil, hard as the bright counters that habit has converted this money to, to them, they lead their life of dreariness, and pass away, nobody missing, nobody regretting them.

The players in the first rank occupy chairs; the outsiders stand. Where shall we select a subject for observation? There is one—the young man with a broad coarse face, eyes too close together, lips too wide apart, sensual and imbecile at once. Mind seems to have feared lest conduct like his should be attributed to her, and to have stamped the declaration of her absence on his face. The ancient patrimony squandered leaves him the ancient name to drag dishonoured through the court of bankruptcy. The next face tells a different tale—a good face learning bad expressions. The smooth brow wrinkling in a frown, the shapely mouth losing its lines of softness, and the pained eyes forgetful of their kindly look. A short week ago he played his maiden stake: it was as much a portion of his programme as to climb the Jungfrau, or see the Stalpfels. He played to lose and won; since then he has played to

win and lost—and now he sits bewildered, fearing alike “to bear those ills he has, or fly to others that he knows not of.” Close by, is one who comes from Australia—a man of many speculations and fortunate in all. Countless herds peopled his vast “runs,” and multiplied like the patriarch’s in Padan-Aram. When sheep and oxen lost their worth as such, tallow took the form of wealth and slipped into his coffers. When earth gave forth her secret, and the startled colony went mad on gold, he dealt in that until his name became the synonym of luck. Now he sits the cool-headed speculator, shrewdly conscious that the present speculation is a sham, yet unconvinced that there is not in its constitution some flaw through which his coach-and-four of luck may be driven. Habit of rapid thought and practice of self-reliance are shown in his look and gestures, and the homely ill-cut clothes he wears are borne with the ease of one whom success has rendered independent of appearances.

Some cards whereon the game is pricked by pin-holes, and an open memorandum-book whose page shows columns of pencilled figures, lie before him, ramparted by piles of double Fredericks J’or. He seldom stakes, but, as each “coup” is called, perforates the card with his pin beneath the “R” for “rouge” or “N” for “noir,” according as each wins. Careful never to miss the call, he still finds time to watch the fluctuations of a neighbour’s fortune, or take a lesson in human nature from the countenances round him, in his quick, brief mode of gathering conclusions.

That old woman next to him has fixed his attention, as in querulous tones she addresses the grey-haired attendant at her side. False hair, false teeth, false bloom, false everything. Widow of a subtle statesman whom Europe honoured, she peers through her artificial curls at the gold she stakes upon the board that earns it her; for Countess — holds it no disgrace to owe her revenues to shares in the Casino. Hear how she rates her poor old servant because the rouge whereon he staked by her direction, lost. Her shrivelled fingers, glittering with gems, strive to supply the place of failing sight by *feeling* for her gold. At times, they come in contact with another player’s stake, and, on learning her mistake, the courtliness of manner that neither age nor avarice can spoil, dignifies the prompt apology; followed, however, by as prompt abuse of her attendant. Forty years and more, she says, she has played where she sits, and she hopes to die there.

The Australian stakes at last. Six times noir has won in succession; the rakes have collected and distributed the coin from the last coup, then sounds the banker’s voice: “Faites vos jeux, messieurs!” The Australian, catching his eye, touches the red diamond with his pencil, and declares, “Cent Fredericks!” “Cent Fredericks à la rouge? C’est bien, monsieur;” then, after looking round the table, the banker adds, “Vos jeux sont faits, messieurs? rien ne va plus!” The cards fly from his rapid fingers, and the declaration of their value from his fluent tongue: “Neuf, seize, dix-neuf, vingt-sept, trente-cinq. Dix, vingt, vingt-trois,

vingt-neuf, trente-deux. Rouge gagne et couleur perd ! The croupier now thrusts with his rake a rouleau of fifty double Fredericks to the rouge, and as he withdraws his arm rakes in whatever stakes lie on couleur. Our Australian does not withdraw the rouleau ; he enters the usual memorandum in his book, perforates his card beneath the "R," and scarcely looking up, declares—"Deux cent Fredericks." "Deux cent Fredericks à la rouge," repeats the banker, imperturbably. Once more the game proceeds with the result—"Rouge gagne et couleur !" Two more rouleaux from the bank swell the Australian's stake. The countess in feeling about upsets one of the piles of gold in front of him. "O mon Dieu, monsieur, qu'est ce que je viens de faire ? pardonnez-moi, je vous en prie. Mais, Antoine, vous êtes vraiment insupportable ; vous n'êtes bon qu'à manger des pommes et à baigner mes chiens. Voilà encore une maladresse que vous me faites faire. Mille pardons, monsieur, je vous supplie !"

Long before the old lady has finished speaking the Australian has re-made the pile of gold, and with a smile that partakes as much of pity as good-nature, is entering the game in his book. "Tout à la masse, monsieur ?" inquires the banker, with his finger on the cards. Our player nods. "Quatre cent Fredericks à la rouge—rien ne va plus ! Deux, huit, douze, vingt-deux, vingt-huit, trente-sept—" That looks like winning for the rouge. "Quatre, douze, dix-sept, dix-neuf, vingt-neuf, trente-huit—" No ! by the fickle goddess ! "Noir gagne et couleur !" The Australian does not even cast a look at the rouleaux as they are raked into the bank. Not so the player with the handsome face and troubled look ; his knees tremble convulsively beneath the table—he too had staked on la rouge. The first will return to his hotel and eat his filet de bœuf à la maître d'hôtel with appetite that no loss he will incur can impair ; the last will lie with the moonlight on his colder face in an avenue of the woods, where the Jager will find him, pistol in hand. "La Direction" will bury him and pay his hotel bill if need be. They would even, had he asked it, have given him the means to go to the next duchy to destroy himself ; but as it has happened here it cannot be helped. "Faites vos jeux, messieurs !" The average of suicides enters into the statistics of the gambling establishments. Last year they were rather in excess of others, and rose, it is stated, to twenty-two cases.

Have you seen enough of the game ? Let us wander on. There is the English chaplain—unobtrusive and obliging to every one. His lines are cast in unpleasant places ; frothy-mouthed bigots "spread phosphorus of zeal on scraps of fustian," and tease his life out. The school of men who vex "the House" with biennial motions to bring in bills to reform the Liturgy, would have him enter Mammon's temple as The Great Example did of old the Jewish one, to overturn the table of the money-changers, and withdraw their subscriptions from the church-fund because the pastor will not preach a gospel of damnation. Some good motive must exist for his presence in this unhallowed place. He cannot distinguish

who greets him, for his sight is very dim ; look at the ill-tied cravat and rebellious collar, and coat buttoned all awry ; his gloves, too, are not fellows—one is black, one green. He sees none of these shortcomings, and who knows him would have a waspish tongue indeed, to speak unkindly of them.

The Jews abound here. Splendid heads have some of them ; but some of them look very evil, too ; hungry, furtive, and unclean. A German Jew is the pariah of the race, and Homburg is his paradise. Here is one before us, sitting at the corner of this second table with several piles of silver coin and a few gold pieces before him. His face makes one think of Judas and the thirty drachmæ ; the woolly hair, grizzling at the temples, peaks down over the low forehead, a ridge of which sustains the straight black eyebrows ; the long, glittering tawny brown eyes seem to express a longing to break all the commandments at once ; his unwashed fingers wander from the double to the single florins as if the desire to gain two conflicted with the wish to risk but one. Let us be thankful that we owe *him* no pound of flesh.

The game, you see, is no longer *Trente et Quarante* ; there is more noise and bustle. This is the roulette table. The machine comprises a fixed sunken basin, channelled mid-way down with a groove in which the ball runs. The bottom of the basin is separate from the sides, and revolves at the motion imparted by the croupier when he turns the lever fixed in its centre. This portion of the machine is divided into thirty-seven small compartments, alternately red and black, and numbered from zero to thirty-six.

When the game begins, the croupier turns the lever smartly, and thus sends the ball spinning round in the groove in a direction opposite to that in which the numbers revolve. Presently the ball, losing the momentum required to keep it in the groove, drops to the lower part of the machine, which retains its rotatory motion for a longer period. Here it is hustled and jumped about against the divisions separating the figures, until, finally, it lights in the numbered space between some two of them, which decides the result of the coup. Observe that each half of the table presents, firstly, three columns of twelve figures each, coinciding with those in the basin, but inclosed in squares like those of a chess-board, and so arranged that the sequence runs horizontally across the three columns, not longitudinally down their length. The zero occupies a space by itself at the head of the column ; secondly, right and left of the numbers, a lined space divided into three sections ; those to the right presenting respectively a red diamond (*rouge*), then the word *pair*, further on the word *passe*, and, in the corresponding sections in the lined space on the opposite side of the table, a green diamond, *noir*, and the words *impair* and *manque* ; thirdly, at the end of the table farthest removed from the machine, another lined space a few inches in breadth, subdivided at its right and left extremities into three small squares.

Such is the roulette table. The choice of chances is varied. You can play on any one or any quantity of the numbers by placing a stake

on each of those you back, and if among your choice there should happen to be the corresponding number to that into which the ball falls, you become entitled to thirty-five times the amount of the stake upon it. Or you may play a single stake upon any two contiguous figures by placing it on the line separating the one from the other. In the event of either coming up you are entitled to sixteen times the amount of your stake. Or upon any four, by covering the point at which two lines cross in the body of the columns, by which means the coin touches the corners of four adjacent squares. Success entitles to eight times the stake. Or upon any sequence of three by placing a coin upon the boundary line in front of the sequence you select. Or sequence of six by allowing the coin to touch the boundary as well as the dividing line between two sequences. To make the meaning plainer : you see that the numbers 1, 2, 3, form the first series heading their respective columns divided by a horizontal line from 4, 5, 6, which follow in the second rank. To stake on the first sequence it would be necessary to place a coin so that one half of it lay inside the square occupied by the 1 or the 3, and the other half outside the line defining the space allotted to the numbers. To retain the sequence of six, while half the coin must still be outside the boundary line, the other must cover the point of contact of this last with the line separating 1, 2, 3, from 4, 5, 6. A successful coup on the sequence of three entitles to eight, on the sequence of six to five times the amount staked.

The three smaller squares at the end of the table are termed severally the places of "*Le premier douze*," "*Le douze du milieu*," and "*Le douze dernier*." By placing a stake in the first you back the twelve numbers from one to twelve inclusive, the second represents those from thirteen to twenty-four, the third, the remaining twelve numbers from twenty-five to thirty-six. Should any one of the numbers in the douze you play upon, win, you become entitled to twice the amount of your stake. You may, if you prefer it, back any one of the longitudinal columns of twelve figures—the result of success is the same.

The compartments in the machine being alternately red and black, explain the significancy of the red and green diamonds.

Pair (even) wins when the number declared is even.

Impair (odd) when the reverse is the case.

Passe (to pass) is successful when the declared number is included in the last half of the numbers, and has passed the middle number eighteen.

Manque (to miss) when it falls short of, or only attains to the middle number. Whenever zero is declared, the bank takes every stake on all the numbers except it; but those on the colours and on pair, impair, passe, and manque, are placed in prison, and played for in the same way as when a *refait* occurs at *Trente et Quarante*, and with results as little remunerative to the player.

Now, watch the game in operation ; it sounds a more complex affair than it is. Look at that tall man with the heavy bushy moustache, who has just tossed a gold piece on the numbers, seemingly indifferent as to

which it lights on. The croupier bows, and indicating 12 with the end of his rake, inquires by the gesture if that be where the money is to be staked. The player's countenance is not a common one, neither German, English, nor French in type—a bold manly face too—thought, obstinacy, and resolution about it. He does not look a communicative man, nor of those one would ask to pass the salt, or give a light for a cigar. There goes the machine. The keen eyes of banker and croupiers are on every square inch of the table to see that no stake is placed or altered when the ball falls. So! did you not hear it drop? “Rien ne va plus. Trente-deux, rouge, pair, et passe!” Such is the banker's declaration.

With a half smile the tall loser of the gold piece turns away, his eyebrows lifting slightly as he encounters the glance of two gentlemen, who standing behind him move aside to let him pass, and follow him at a short distance as he moves towards the doors. His gold piece is tossed in among the rest; to-morrow it will be no longer recognizable. The hand that staked it can do much, but cannot make the double Frederick worth more than twenty florins, although it belongs to Alexander, Emperor of All the Russias.

Is it Humboldt, in his *Cosmos*, who says that every separate atom possesses in itself all the natural properties and forces of this agglomeration of atoms on which man sells and buys, marries, and makes his last will and testament? Well, Homburg is no more than an atom. A particle cohering to the totality of the great human system by the central attraction of civilization, exactly as a grain of sand gravitates to the earth's centre. And just as mites betray their existence, with all its fit conditions, upon the grain of sand, so is human society in all its phases, and under all its aspects, visible on the larger atom—Homburg. The evil aspects predominate; but so they would everywhere, if mortal intelligence could take cognizance of the doings and seemings of the whole human family. Homburg is a microcosm; Gulliver could see a vast deal more in Lilliput than he could in Brobdingnag.

Turn your eyes upon that group of people pressed one against the other to watch those two Frenchmen who are playing in concert at the roulette table. By the way, one of the players is he who was condemned the other day *par contumace*, as the absolutist tribunals in France call it, to several years' penal servitude for the most flagitious cheating at the Paris clubs. Well, within that group are to be found representatives of most of the classes into which nature, employment, or necessity has forced the flood of humanity to diverge. Can you recognize any of the spectators? No. You see that little man, so short that even on tiptoe he can scarcely look over the shoulders of those in front—he with the green ribbon in his button-hole. A beholder cannot remember what his face is like, because it is so difficult to get beyond his eyes. What a glance there is in those deep dark optics: how unwinkingly they meet one—the windows of his brain whence his thought looks out: he is one of the great clocks of finance; when he strikes the money-mongers

set their watches by him. He is great on the Danube—vast at Vienna, and has solved the problem of extracting riches from poverty—*entendu*, that of the Austrian exchequer. The man whose broad shoulders intercept his view spends a fortune in advertising a quack medicine; the advertisement sheet of every newspaper in Great Britain undergoes a course of his pills. Near him again, is an oddity; the old, old man in the brown coat with a cape to it. He was at the duchess's ball at Brussels on that memorable summer night in —15. The British treasury has paid him half-pay for fifty years, which he has regularly lost at roulette; he spends his life in compiling systems of play, in the belief that the bank is to be broken by arithmetic.

What a lovely face!—that girl's who has just handed a florin to the croupier to stake for her. Where are we to find the blue with which her eyes are painted! So young, so beautiful, so innocent; for crime itself would be found not guilty if detected in such guise. Mercy upon us, what a sham the world is. She is *Fräulein* —, *la sylphide des sylphides* of the ballet at Berlin, and that gentleman who has just arrested her hand in the act of passing another stake to the croupier is the Herzog von —, her protector.

The embryo Redpaths and Robsons of society are there too, looking with sickening heart at the rake of the croupier, pitilessly overtaking the gold diverted from its legitimate destination, and feeling the damp shade of the prison creeping over the glittering saloons—the “coming event casting its shadow before.”

Certainly it was not philanthropy which built the Casino in Homburg. The town itself possesses neither attraction nor interest. The neighbourhood is charming, but far less so than the Valley of the Lahn, or the banks of the Neckar, and would not attract or retain the crowd of strangers that resorts to it but for the lure of the Casino. Of course it will be advanced by its defenders, that the benefit the town derives from the influx of visitors is at once the motive and justification of the establishment, and that the insignificance of the town, apart from it, adds cogency to the justification. The objections that suggest themselves to this theory are, the manifest incongruity of subsidizing the sovereign of a state enormously for permission to improve his dominions; the stringent municipal regulations, prohibiting all participation of the subjects of the Landgrave in the pursuits of the Casino, and the oft-recurring enactments by which the government finds it necessary to exercise pressure on the Direction, to wring from them their unwilling contributions towards the maintenance of the town.

Homburg proper benefits but in an infinitesimal degree from the toleration extended to legalized robbery. The hotel-keepers (and Homburg, like Ems in Nassau, and Interlaken in Switzerland, is little more than an assemblage of hotels,) are almost without exception strangers who transfer from the scene of their accumulation the fortunes made there. The “Direction” is foreign in all its elements, and if we except a few

Jew money-lenders (by courtesy bankers) who, for the most part, keep branches of other establishments—these are the only communities who profit by the existing state of things.

The outward and visible attractions of the Casino are so offered that any mere pleasure-seeker may readily be misled into the belief that Homburg is but a German Cheltenham improved upon by the liberality of its organizers. Gratuitous amusements in a sumptuous edifice create a feeling in favour of the promoters, which, in an uninitiated person, inspires something akin to gratitude. No sort of pressure is exercised to exact compensation from the amused by attendance at the gambling-tables. Curiosity and covetousness are the allies the Direction counts upon to serve their turn. The balls, sporting, concerts, theatre, races, &c. are the confection, les salons the grain of strychnine it overlays.

The imposture practised under the title *Trente et Quarante* and *Roulette* is so patent that the signalizing of a few facts will render it clear to the most careless attention. It is not here intended to convey the impression that individuals have never risen from the tables with money won; but it must be borne in mind that the money is not won from the bank, but from other individuals who are losers as a necessary corollary to the first individual's being a winner. Every player at either of the games established in the Homburg salons, is *betting odds on an even event*. The establishment of a maximum stake which a player cannot exceed, precludes the neutralization of the odds zero creates in favour of the bank. Were it possible to double the stake after each loss until the fluctuations of the game brought round the player's turn for success, capital would always counterbalance zero, but your power of staking being limited, added to the fact that at roulette the chances are thirty-seven to one against every single number on the table, two to one against every douze, and that the apparently even betting on the rouge or noir, pair or impair, passe or manque, is enormously modified against the player by the zero; it becomes evident that to sustain the hypothesis of a possibility of winning at the game is to maintain that abnormal conditions are the rule, and normal the exception. At *Trente et Quarante* the events betted upon are, in their essence, *even*, but the *refait* gives the bank the certainty of winning without the possibility of loss; for inasmuch as, of the four denominations or chances, two must lose, whenever a *refait* takes place, the two losing chances pay the bank, while the two that win merely regain their own stakes.

Homburg, then, possesses interesting features of its own: it offers the spectacle of the mine of weakness being sagaciously worked by avarice, and so we may dismiss the subject, with the brief verdict:—"Players deserve to lose—but the bank does not deserve to win!"

The aerial machine is once more spreading its wings. Lady of the dogs, Sir Dandy of the football, miserable pawnier of the diamond, farewell!

Recollections of Crime and Criminals in China.

WE have heard many stories of ingenious rogues in this country—of highwaymen whose horses had been shod the wrong way, so that they were believed to have taken a course directly opposed to that by which they really went; of pickpockets inventing instruments so ingenious, that they not only carried off from the makers all that was paid for the machine, but a great deal thereto in addition; of women in omnibuses with false glove-covered palms resting quietly on their knees, while the nimble fingers of the real hands were busied in levying contributions from the pockets of their fellow-passengers to the right and the left. But inventive and amusing among ourselves as are the displays of the multitudinous varieties of freebooters, sharpers, swindlers, cutpurses, footpads, and all the race, which, according to the record of the young practitioner of the Old Bailey,

Prigs what isn't his'n
An' ven they're cocht, is put in pris'n,

some of the acts of the Chinese performers may be placed in no disadvantageous contrast with the feats of the most distinguished heroes or heroines of our English gaols.

At Macao, on the ground-floor, a large table was spread for a late dinner. It was covered with many delicacies, and, as usual, there was an abundance of silver plate. The sun had gone down, the wax-candles were lighted, the windows left open for the benefit of the evening breeze. Suddenly a great number of bamboos were seen to enter on all sides from the verandahs, at the same moment every bougie was extinguished by a puff from the bamboo hollow tubes. The apartment was involved in darkness, a band of thieves jumped in, and before the astounded guests knew where they were, or what was doing, the whole of the plate was conveyed away, and a boat having, no doubt, been provided for the transport of the spoil either to a neighbouring island or to the mainland of China, no trace was ever found of the robbery or the robbers. The silver made its way very speedily to the melting-pot, and the successful invaders, who had their confederates around or about the house, would have no difficulty in finding participators and protectors among the *ladrones* who have given a name to the robber islands haunted from time immemorial by plunderers and pirates.

A gentleman was walking one day in the neighbourhood of Macao, which is one of the prettiest and healthiest places in Southern China, and has many attractions to invite wanderers. In one of its valleys grow the pitcher-plants—emerald urns suspended, filled with clear water, protected by prickly edged lids, as if for the service of fairy visitors; in another

are musical rocks, which on being struck, give forth a mysterious harmony. A group of Chinamen were seen in the distance, with whom a loungee was struggling. They mastered him, threw him on his back, two seized his arms, one sat upon his legs, a fourth was engaged in stuffing mud into his mouth, and a fifth in rifling his pockets. It is seldom that marauders are armed, or that they venture upon these depredations, unless they are much stronger than those they attack, nor will they attack any one who has the means of defence, and in the present case, when disturbed by the approach of a single individual, they all ran away.

But to a tale of deeper dye. The most daring deed of which I have any knowledge, was the assassination of Amaral, the Governor of Macao. He not only was the object of the hate and the opprobrium with which all conquerors are regarded, but he was especially marked out by popular indignation as having disturbed the manes of the dead by making a public road through one of the adjacent cemeteries, and requiring the friends and families of those whose coffins were likely to be disturbed, to remove them to some other resting-place. No greater outrage certainly could have been contemplated for insulting Chinese opinion. The associations of the living with the homes of the dead are stronger in China than in any part of the world. Nothing is deemed more important than the choice of the locality in which the mortal remains of relatives are to be deposited. The selection of an appropriate spot is sometimes delayed for years; family consultations take place, liberally paid geomancers are consulted, and corpses remain above ground and uninterred for years, until some auspicious site is selected, where the spirit of the departed may find repose and receive the oblations of future generations. The land is believed to be haunted by the unquiet ghosts of those who have either found no graves, or whose graves give no repose to the over-wearied corpse. When the tomb has been happily chosen, it is believed that the spirit sits unseen on the stone sepulchre, which has frequently the shape of a throne, and thence contemplates with serene enjoyment the scenery around, and welcomes the anniversary offerings which are brought to honour the domiciles of the dead. Amaral was probably little aware of the storm of passion he was sure to arouse, when—for carrying out a purpose of public utility—he determined to disregard the very dearest prejudices and the most solemn rites and observances of the people whom he governed. He forgot that his right to govern them was equally denied by the Chinese authorities and Chinese residents in the island, which indeed never had been formally ceded to the Portuguese. The intention of the governor to remove the tombstones which lay along the projected road having been made known, great murmurs arose among the population, and many representations were made as to the perils he would incur if he persevered in his scheme. But Amaral was one of the bravest of men, and had the meanest opinion of the courage of the Chinese. He had been a captain in the naval service of his native land. When a midshipman one of his arms was shot away in battle, and his exclamation has been honoured with frequent eulogiums—

"Never mind, I have still an arm left for the service of my country!" The walls of Macao and the adjacent villages were placarded with announcements that an enormous sum would be paid for the head of the barbarian chief who had desecrated the sacred domiciles of the departed. But Amaral turned a deaf ear to those who advised him to be cautious, and only just before the coming catastrophe, and close to the very spot where it occurred, and which was the scene of his daily rides—towards the gate which separates the Chinese from the Portuguese limits—he said laughingly to the writer, "There is nothing to fear; they offer more for my head than my whole body is worth!"

Three days after this conversation Amaral and his aide-de-camp started on their accustomed promenade on horseback. They had nearly reached the gate when three well-dressed Chinamen crossed the way, having in their hands branches of bamboos. They struck the governor, who fell from his horse, over which, single-handed, he had little power. The aide-de-camp, with incredible cowardice, galloped away and left his master in the hands of the assassins: at some distance an American gentleman witnessed all that passed. When Amaral lay on the ground one of the Chinamen with a huge knife severed his head from his body, and another cut off his only hand—the left hand—and they walked quickly away with their bloody trophies, leaving the mutilated body on the road. The character and all the circumstances of the act led to representations and remonstrances addressed to Commissioner Yeh, the Viceroy of Kwantung, and the pursuit and punishment of the murderers, and the restoration of the head and hand of the governor were insisted on by the diplomatic representatives of all the treaty powers. It was well known that the assassins were the representatives of public opinion, and the advanced instruments of public passion, and it was believed that they would be allowed to escape, and that they would, according to a common Chinese practice, be substituted by others innocent of the crime. But in this case it appeared the leader made that crime the subject of self-glorification, and expressed himself not repentant, but rejoicing in the deed he had done. The head, embedded in gypsum within a case employed for its preservation, and the hand, were restored to the Macao authorities, and buried with all honour in the Catholic cemetery. The leader on his way to execution clamorously boasted of the success of his act, and demanded not the sympathy but the approval and applause of the bystanders. The Cantonese erected a temple in his honour, and made a liberal provision for his family and their descendants.

This habit of giving pensions to the widows and children of those who are believed to have been the victims of unjust sentences is common in China. In cases of officials of the highest rank, whose administration has been unfortunate, suicide is a common occurrence, and the reports of ill-success are usually accompanied by a self-imposed sentence, and a request that punishment, even the punishment of death, may be the imperial award. There are in the history of China many accounts of

censors, who being especially appointed to watch and criticize the conduct of the Emperor, had discharged their duty so boldly as to have brought down upon themselves banishment, and even death-punishments in aggravated forms. In the ancient annals such are mentioned with special honour. The severe judgments of the censors appear in the official Gazette of Peking, and during the late war were published the strongest animadversions on the unbecoming proceedings of the reigning monarch, to whose licentiousness the disasters of the empire and the successes of the foreign barbarians were openly attributed. He condescended to justify himself by averring that the censors had been misinformed, and that he was not the unworthy being they represented him to be, but he did not visit them with any penalties. He acknowledged that he had appealed in vain to the divinities, and having failed to propitiate them could not but confess his own demerits. Not very long ago, in the province of Kiangsoo, the despotic acts of one of the great mandarins led to popular tumults, and an elder of great literary reputation was called upon by the people to prepare a petition to the Emperor recounting the misdeeds of the high functionary, and imploring his removal. The petition was accompanied with the usual request that the petitioner might be becomingly punished for having ventured, unbidden, though prostrate, into the "sacred presence," and to ask the "sacred glance" to look, in its marvellous condescension, on the humble representation of a slave. By imperial mandate the grievance was redressed, the mandarin was disgraced, and a more popular magistrate appointed in his place. The additional prayer was granted, for the punishment of the ancient scribe—the representations, though true, were reproachful to the Government, and threw a slur upon the administration of the Son of Heaven—so he must be visited with the proper penal consequences—the nails were violently torn from the fingers of the hand which had written the petition; this was followed by the beheading of the writer. The grateful people were satisfied—they knew that the merits of him who was sacrificed for their sakes would secure for him an undoubted immortality in the Buddhistic heaven—an immediate absorption into the divinity—his name would be recorded in honourable and everlasting remembrance on the tablets of the ancestral temple, and a liberal pension was decreed to his family. The wrongs were righted, the deserving filly rewarded, the Emperor's authority maintained, the opinion of the people had prevailed, and everything was as it ought to be.

Near the governor's house at Hong Kong was that of his aide-de-camp. It was built, as many of the houses are, with a long stone passage, on each side of which are the apartments, and at the end, close to a wall, was a large gong, employed, as they generally are, to give notice either of the arrival of guests, of the hour of meals, or for any other purpose which requires the attention of the servants. One night the silence was broken by the unusual noise of the gong—everybody was awakened, and it was discovered that housebreakers had made a hole through the wall, and that

the leader of the party pushing his head forward had his progress interrupted by the gong, whose echoes roused the whole community, and the whole party alarmed by the unexpected public announcement of their fraudulent arrival, fled—one of them was shot in the leg and was captured—the rest escaped covered by the darkness of the night.

At the time when large rewards were offered for the kidnapping of barbarians and the delivery of their heads to the Chinese authorities, the sum for persons of the lowest rank being 100 ounces (Taels) of silver, rising by rapid gradations to enormous sums for the higher functionaries, Alun, the Hong Kong baker, was the object of much indignation in England, as having compassed the poisoning by arsenic of more than 350 persons; but Alun was undoubtedly innocent; the perpetrators were probably two foremen of the bakery; and there is reason to believe the bribe paid for the monstrous scheme of murder was five hundred dollars, which was provided by a society at Canton who publicly advertised that they sought by subscriptions to get rid by any means of the "foreign devils," and who published the tariff of rewards to be paid according to the official position of the parties delivered, dead or alive, to the authorities appointed to receive them. Four or five heads were exposed on the walls of Canton, and placarded as being those of Englishmen. Some of them were certainly lascars, but there is some doubt whether any one of them was really kidnapped, as no individual was known to have disappeared from the colony, and it was believed that the heads had been separated from the corpses of those who had died a natural death and delivered to the mandarins for the sake of the proffered bribe. There were many attempts at incendiarism in the Colony, only one of which succeeded; several schemes of assassination, one a grand gunpowder plot for blowing up the cathedral when all the dignitaries were assembled for worship; others for individual murder from ambushes, but in almost every case the projects were made known to the Government, or the parties concerned, and provided against by proper precautions. One characteristic scheme for carrying off the governor is worth commemorating. The Government House—the most prominent edifice in the Colony—is built on the side of a hill, overlooking one of the most beautiful harbours in the world, in which there is a safe anchorage extending for more than five miles between the island and the mainland opposite. In front of the building is an esplanade, where the sentinels on guard keep watch, parading to and fro; a rapid slope descends from the esplanade to the road below. There was an apartment at the extremity of the building where the governor was accustomed to sit when the family had retired to rest, and which was then the only lighted portion of the house. One night, or rather early one morning—it was very dark and stormy—the sentinel, an Indian sepoy, was pulled down by a sharp instrument which had entered the calf of his leg, and he saw the head of a Chinaman above the parapet who was followed by other men; he fell down in a pool of blood which flowed from the wound made by the iron hook by which it was purposed to drag him

down the declivity, but he had the presence of mind to fire, and though the shot did not hit any of the intruders, they fled, and the report of the musket brought others of the watch to the relief of the sentinel, who was seriously injured and confined to the hospital for some weeks. Such was his exasperation against the Chinese for what he called their trick and treachery that he declared he would avenge himself by murdering the first Chinaman he met, and there was some difficulty in obtaining from him a promise that he would not commit an act the punishment of which would be far more severe than anything he had suffered from the man who had endeavoured stealthily to pull him over the precipitous bank.

Dexterous as are our pickpockets in filching pocket-handkerchiefs, stealing purses, and practising other larcenies, those of Canton are far more bold and ingenious, and, strange to say, there is seldom any interference from passers-by for the assistance of the robbed, or the capture of the robber. A shopkeeper will not leave his shop to denounce a thief who is committing depredations at his very door, but will probably laugh at the cleverness of the impudent and successful vagabond, who, unmolested, carries off his prey. A single thief has been known to arrest a sedan-chair, and to rob the party conveyed within it, the bearers (they not being accomplices, but considering the matter as no concern of theirs) stopping and looking on while the nefarious deed was done. In one case, when a short-sighted man was being carried in his sedan, his spectacles were removed before his pockets were emptied, and the robbery took place in a long street where multitudes of persons were constantly passing. Murders were frequently committed in the boats at Hong Kong, in the presence of many spectators, who seldom or ever attempted to prevent the crimes, and who never denounced the criminals. It was necessary to publish a proclamation, declaring that the licence to trade or to ply for hire would be taken away from the boat-owners who, when they witnessed any violent outrage, did not come to the aid of the injured—did not report the fact to the police, or render, when called upon, their assistance for the detection and prevention of crime.

A few years ago a vessel arrived from California at Hong Kong. There was a Chinese boy on board, a favourite of the captain, who had given him the name of "Celestial." He enjoyed the full confidence of his master. He attended upon his person, and became acquainted with the fact that in the captain's desk a large sum of money was deposited in a concealed drawer. The secret was known only to the lad and his master. One day the captain found the money gone. Celestial had disappeared, and there seemed no reasonable doubt that he had taken the money and made off, as it was very easy for him to do, to the adjacent continent, where inquiry and pursuit would be equally vain. The conclusion was, indeed, so natural, that on reporting the matter to the police no hopes of redress could be given, and there was no ground for then believing that there had been any associates in the robbery, which was sufficiently explained by the absence of the lad. But some hours after-

wards it was discovered that several of the crew had been spending, in Hong Kong, far larger sums of money than they could have come by honestly, and that dollars abounded on board to an extent for which no satisfactory explanation could be given, and the police were instructed to proceed to the ship and to institute further inquiries. At the moment when the boat reached the side of the vessel, a corpse rose to the surface of the water; it was the body of Celestial, tied to an iron bar, under whose weight it had sunk when flung into the sea, but as corruption and inflation took place the diminished specific gravity of the corpse had been sufficient to bring it up from the bottom to the top, and the murdered boy appeared to accompany the officers of justice and to bring damning evidence of the foul crime which had been committed. Abundant testimony was obtained from the less criminal of the sailors, who had received a portion of the money but who had had no participation in the projected murder, the principal actors in which were proceeded against, and the evidence left not a shadow of a doubt as to their guilt. It appeared that the boy, bursting with his secret, communicated it to some of the crew, and was persuaded by them when the captain was on shore to steal the money from the secret drawer, of which they promised to give him a considerable portion when it should be distributed. Celestial got hold of the money and handed it over to his evil counsellors, by whom he was suddenly seized; an iron bar was fastened by a rope to his body, and it was thrown into the sea, and of course disappeared. The rising of the corpse, as has been described, filled the crew with terror, and their superstitious feelings were so worked upon by what seemed a miraculous intervention of God for the denunciation and punishment of murder, that every particular was given of the circumstances associated with the dreadful deed, even to the amount which each had received for the purchase of his silence. Three of the worst of the criminals were sentenced to death: two were Irishmen, probably convicts escaped from Australia, one of whom confessed that it was not the first murder he had committed; the third was a Breton, who, strange to say, had for his father confessor a priest who had been the *cure* in the very village in Brittany where he was born, and who had known him in his boyhood. The Frenchman was finally sentenced to imprisonment for life; the others were hanged. They showed that utter indifference and contempt for death, which is common in a country where life is deemed of so little value that an execution is a matter of small concern. The British mode of disposing of condemned criminals excited at first some curiosity from its novelty; and I had once brought to me a series of pictures painted by a Chinaman under sentence of death, on which he employed himself in prison till the time of his being led out to the scaffold. It was a case of murder, and the pictures represented all the fancied contortions of his body after the falling of the drop. I was informed that they were all painted in the merriest mood, and that he was very desirous of ascertaining from the turnkeys whether they resembled the living and would resemble the dying man.

A barbarous murder was committed, in open day, on a flight of steps in the populous part of Hong Kong, by a pedlar boy of only nine or ten years old on another pedlar boy of the same age, for the purpose of obtaining only a few *tchien*—five of which make a farthing—the murderer having informed himself beforehand that the murdered only possessed the miserable sum which the determination not to surrender cost him his life. How is a wise and humane legislature to deal with such offences and such offenders?

Among amusing modes of plunder in China is the fishing for fowls, the catching them with rod, line, and hook. A man will be sometimes seen sitting on the wall of a poultry-yard, bobbing his bait among the cocks and hens, and every now and then, after twisting its neck, conveying one away to his bag; and that being replenished, he will move off with a simplicity and serenity of countenance like the gravest of mandarins. I never remember witnessing a more self-composed expression of innocence than in the case of a man who had stolen my pocket-handkerchief even while he was concealing it under his jacket behind.

Some of the more daring exploits are the kidnapping of opulent men, who are sometimes carried off into the mountains, or concealed in obscure places until a large sum is obtained for their ransom. A rich shopkeeper in New China Street—well known to all visitors in Canton as the locality where *curios* (Anglo-Chinese for ‘curiosities’) are bought, and most of the costly articles supplied for foreign demand—was conveyed away to the hills and detained until he paid an extravagant price for his liberation. When the rebels were in Shanghai they managed to seize one of the bankers of the city, and extorted from him enormous sums by roasting him before a fire, when in his agony he signed the money orders which his cashier felt it his duty to pay in order to save his master's life. The roastings were frequently renewed in consequence of the success of the experiment.

Dante.

DANTE was born in Florence on the 14th May, 1265. On the 14th May, 1865, Italy, for the first time, celebrated the anniversary of his birth, acclaiming him the precursor of her resurrection, while the latest descendants of the Florentines who so ill-treated him sought how best to atone for the injustice of their ancestors. The attitude of the statue erected in the Piazza of Santa Croce does not certainly impress one with the idea of an appeased spirit. The scornful gesture of the exile, his eye fixed on Florence, reminds us of the writer of the letter of the 31st March, 1311, headed, "Dante Alighieri, Florentine, unjustly exiled, to the infamous Florentines who dwell in the city," containing the following sentence:—"O vainest among Tuscans, by nature and by custom stolid. O miserable descendants of the Fiesolians! O modern Carthaginian barbarians!"

If report speak truly, it was the line—

O servile Italy, of woe the home!

that inspired the sculptor Pazzi's hand; and the apostrophe comes not amiss from Dante's lips at a moment when the national sentiment is offended by the negotiations entered into between the Pope and the Italian Government. Dante, who digs a deep narrow red-hot hole in hell, and thrusts down, headforemost, one on the top of the other, the successors of St. Peter—Dante, who sorrowfully exclaims, "Ah, Constantine! how many ills were caused, not by thy conversion, but by that dower which from thee the first rich Father took"—Dante, who represents St. Peter as losing patience in the serene spheres of Paradise, and while the heavens were eclipsed, even as when Christ suffered on the cross, venting his magnanimous ire in the following invective:—"Those who usurp my place, my place, my place, which, in the presence of God's Son, is void, have made a sewer of my cemetery. . . . The bride of Christ was not fed with my blood, with that of Linus and of Cletus, that she might serve to purchase gold. . . . It was not our intention that a portion of the Christian people should be seated on the right hand of our successors and a portion on the left; nor that the Keys which were committed to me should serve as signs on the banners of those who combat the baptized; nor that I should stand as signet seal for venal, lying privileges, the thought of which often makes me blush and burn. In the dress of shepherds we see rapacious wolves roaming over all the pastures. O arm of God, why tarriest thou still?"—Dante, could he now behold the most

splendid conquests of progress sacrificed to the Pope, would assuredly repeat—

O servile Italy, of woe the home!

The ceaseless war he waged against the Papacy in his poem, and in his minor works, throughout the chequered vicissitudes of his life, forms one of his chief titles to the gratitude of Italians; but it was ignored by the directors of the sixth centenary festival, who honoured in him the father and prophet of Italian unity.

Dante having exhausted his researches into all the dialects of the peninsula, created at one stroke the Italian language, brought it forth as Michel Angelo his statues, sculpturing them at once in the marble. The Italian of the *Divine Comedy*, the *Vita Nuova*, the *Convito*, is, with very slight modifications, the same as we write and speak at the present day; and it is worthy of note that, as long as Dante remained the inspirer and guide of Italian intellect, Italy never knew an inglorious moment; whereas she has rapidly declined every time that, forgetting Dante, she has taken Petrarch as her model. Creator of her language and founder of her literature, Dante gave to Italy both word and thought, added intellectual individuality to the individuality of race and soil, and hence is fairly entitled to be regarded as the author of the possibility of an Italian nation, of an Italian autonomy; but neither as prophet nor father of the present Italian unity, of which he never dreamed. As a politician, in common with the jurisconsults of his time, he shared the belief in the resurrection of the Roman empire, desired the predominance of Rome over Italy, and of Italy over the rest of the world, under a German emperor.

Born in the thirteenth century, he died in the early part of the fourteenth, and his grand individuality is reflected in the errors, defects, passions, and virtues of his time. He stands at the head of modern civilization as Homer stands at the head of ancient. He did much to recall men's minds to real and terrestrial life at a time when they were exclusively absorbed in celestial contemplations, influenced by their fears that the end of the world, predicted for centuries, was at hand.

A mundane atmosphere encircles even the saints and blessed ones of Dante's Paradise; the damned in Hell do not envy the elect in the celestial kingdom; they yearn for the bright sunshine, for natural beauties, for busy life, for cities; they are interested in passing events, in the fate of their party; * all the passions that stirred them in life have power to stir them still. Society, thanks to Dante, emerged from the chrysalis in which the prolific barbarity of the Middle Ages had enveloped it, to soar on the wings of the genius of a new European epoch.

* Take, for instance, the reply of Farinata, the Ghibelline, when Dante, in answer to his taunt "that he had twice banished his ancestors from Florence," reminded him that "they returned each time," "an art which the Ghibellines had not learnt." Up to his waist in hottest fire "that magnanimous one changed not his look, nor stirred his neck, nor bent his arm, but continued: *The fact that they learned that art so badly torments me more than this fiery ball.*"

He has had hundreds of commentators and interpreters, each explaining his meaning as best suited their own peculiar views. Benvenuto da Imola and Landino regard him as an artificer of symbols and allegories; Rossetti as a freemason and a Luther; Foscolo as a Ghibelline and apostolic missionary; Balbo as a Guelph; Ozanam as an orthodox Roman Catholic; Mazzini as the Paul of Italian unity; the Florentines and the deputies of the Italian communes present at the sixth centenary festival, as a Count Cavour. Exclusively, he was none of these. He was the man of his age, the grandest individuality of the heroic times of individualism. He loved tenderly, he hated implacably, he was relentless in his vengeance; he thought much, wrought much, and suffered more than all. The plaster cast handed down to us as the one taken from his austere face after death impresses us with the feeling that that face never smiled. This cast, bequeathed by the Marquis Torrigiani to the Royal Gallery of Florence, has, by the Commission chosen to examine the remains of Dante found in Ravenna, been compared with the skull; and, in their report to the Minister of Public Instruction, they pronounce the frontal, eye, and nasal bones to be identical with the impression left in the plaster, making due allowance for the flesh that covered them.

In his youth, an hour of hope, of happiness, of illusion, was vouchsafed to him in the love of Beatrice Portinari, in the friendship of Guido Cavalcanti, and Lapo Gianni. "Who wished to know love," he writes, "might have learned it by watching the tremor of my eyes. . . . When she appeared in any place, no enemy remained to me; indeed, a thrill of charity pervaded my whole frame, causing me to forgive all who had offended me; and to whoever asked me any question, my only answer was love—my countenance clothed with humility."

Guido, I would that Lapo, thou, and I
 Were taken as by magic,
 And put on board a vessel, which, in all winds,
 Sped by our wills alone, should ride the sea,
 So that nor adverse winds nor tempests
 Could place a hindrance in our path.
 So that, guided ever by one will,
 Our wish to stay together should increase.
 I would the good magician sent us also
 Both Monna Vanna* and Monna Bice,†
 And her we find at number thirty,‡
 And there of love conversing ever,
 I would that each of them should be content,
 As I believe that we ourselves should be.

But grief soon overtook him, and remained for ever at his side. "Leaving the world, I went to solitary places to bathe the earth with bitterest tears, and then, when this weeping had somewhat relieved me, I retired to my chamber, that there I might moan unheard And I returned

* Guido Cavalcanti's lady-love.

† Beatrice Portinari.

‡ *Ligia*, the lady-love of Lapo Gianni, to whom Dante, in his *Serventese*, written in honour of sixty beautiful women, gives No. 30; as to Beatrice, No. 9.

to the chamber of tears. . . . O sweetest death, come thou to me, and do not be unkind ! Come to me now, for much I desire thee ! They saest that I already wear thy hue."

Close on the heels of this grief of the poet's imagination followed the crueler grief of reality. He saw his Bice the bride of another, and later learned that she was dead. He was then four-and-twenty, and in the second part of the *New Life*, which he wrote four years later, we find symptoms of a brain distraught. He tells his desolation in lines full of tender reverence, whose beauty was never equalled by Petrarch :—" In tears of grief and sighs of agony, I wear my heart out when I am alone, so that if any saw me they must grieve : and what my life has been since my love went to the *new age*, no living tongue can tell."

In the last paragraph of the *New Life* he writes—" On this a marvellous vision appeared to me, and in it I saw things which decided me to speak no more of that blessed one until such time as I might speak of her more worthily. And to attain to this I study as much as I can, as she well knows. So that if it be the good pleasure of Him by whom all things live that my life for a few years shall endure, I hope to speak of her as no woman has ever yet been spoken of."

This marvellous vision was the first conception of the *Divina Commedia*. His passion for the beautiful Portinari was merged in intellectual love ; the terrestrial Venus, as Socrates says, was transformed into the celestial Venus. Beatrice—symbol henceforward of wisdom, virtue, philosophy, theology, the idol of his whole life—sends Virgil to lead him out of the " dark wood " in which he had lost his way, and to guide him in his pilgrimage through Hell ; then, acclaimed by angels, who strew flowers on her path, she herself descends to accompany him in his visit to Paradise. " Already I beheld, at break of day, the Eastern sky rose-tinted, and the Western heaven dressed in a sweet serenity, and the sun's face arose so veiled that, tempered by the mists, the eye could long gaze upon it. So, in a cloud of flowers, strewn by hands angelic, falling within and round the car and on the snow-white veil with olive crowned, a woman, 'neath a mantle green, appeared, and robed in hues of living flame." The mantle green, the veil white, the dress flame-coloured—here we have the national Italian tricolour of to-day.

The poet now gives us to understand that Beatrice's heart had not always remained deaf to the beatings of his own. She, telling the angels who encircled her of his subsequent infidelities, timidly confessed her love :—" Once I sustained him with my glance, on him my eyes in girlhood turned, to lead him by my side in the right path."

Love-sorrows were now followed by political storms. Born a patriot, of a race so ancient that he claimed to have Roman blood in his veins, proud of his nobility and a bitter seer —

Of every peasant who a partisan becomes,

he stood by the Guelphic banner of his ancestors, and put into the mouth

of Farinata degli Uberti, the chief of the Ghibellines, sentenced with the other leaders, Lambertini, Ezzelino, Buoso, Federigo II., to Hell, the following phrase—"Thy ancestors were fiercely hostile to me, my ancestors, and party; hence I twice dispersed them."

The Ghibelline party first arose in Florence in 1215, and was vanquished in 1267, when it was for the second time banished from the city. The fugitives, aided by the inhabitants of Arezzo, risked their last chance at the famous battle of Campaldino (1289), where they were defeated by the Florentine Guelphs, Dante distinguishing himself in the cavalry van of the victors. The Ghibelline star had already set in Italy when the dynasty of Anjou arose on the ruins of the Swabian throne in Naples, and their last hopes were dead when the Guelphs, during one of their periodical reformations of the republican constitution, decreed that the government should devolve on six Priors. Now the Ghibellines were originally feudal lords, who had been compelled by the inhabitants of Florence to abandon their castles, and adapt themselves to citizen life; they shunned the people, and were partisans of the Emperor. In order to become Priors they were forced to enrol themselves in some trade, to change name and crest, to become as one of the people. The unity of the triumphant Guelphs lasted but a short time under the supreme guardianship of the Pope. In 1300 it was broken up into two factions—the Bianchi or moderate Guelphs, the Neri or Neoguelphs. All these parties, whether Guelphs and Ghibellines, or Bianchi and Neri, were composed of ancient nobles, or nobles recently created, or rich merchants, who alternately strove for and attained the upper hand. The actual people had no part in these societies, and from time to time drove out first one, then the other, from the city. Later they, too, appeared on the battle-field, and the political struggle became a social struggle.

On the 15th of June, 1301, Dante, who had enrolled himself as a druggist, was elected Prior, which office lasted two months. His lofty ideas and expansive views forbade him to ascend to supreme power only to further the narrow aims of the Bianchi faction, to which he belonged; he sought to promote the general interests of the community by counselling measures of strict justice. When the rival parties broke out into open violence, he proposed to send the chiefs of both Bianchi and Neri to the frontier, and his proposal was accepted by the other Priors. Both parties were equally offended, and his impartiality was the origin of his own irreparable misfortunes. This equilibrium was regarded by all as Utopian. Guelphs and Ghibellines, Bianchi and Neri, could not, it was believed, exist at the same time in the same city. One must triumph, while death or exile must be the portion of the others. Yet they were not divided by any very different series of ideas—it was lust of power that separated them. The idea of right was not counterpoised by the correlative idea of duty. Right with them meant wrath enthroned. The Neri, who were partisans of France, invoked the intervention of Charles de Valois, brother of Philip the Bold, who was on his way to

conquer Naples. In order to avert this calamity from Florence, Dante was sent on a mission to Pope Boniface VIII. The Pope buttered him up with fair words and ample promises, but was at the same time engaged in a conspiracy with the Neri and Charles d'Anjou, who entered Florence. Dante, still absent as ambassador, was fined five thousand small florins (*in libris florenorum parvorum*), sentenced to two years of banishment, excluded for life from all public offices (*nullo tempore possit habere aliquod officium vel beneficium pro communi vel a communi Florentiæ*), and in default of payment within three days, to have all his property seized and destroyed. His judges accounted for this sentence by affirming that it had reached the ears of the Podesta (*ex eo quod ad aures nostras et curias nostræ notitia, fama publica referente, pervenit*), that Dante Alighieri was a usurer, guilty of illicit gains, of iniquitous extortions of money and substance, and of sequestering public documents. Thus the vengeance of his adversaries, not content with sending him into poverty and exile, sought also to defame him. The fine he disdained to pay, and on the 10th March was sentenced to perpetual banishment, and, if taken, to be burnt alive (*si in fortiam dicti communis pervenerit, igne comburetur sic quod moriatur*). One of his earliest biographers, Leonardo Aretino, writes: "They produced a document to substantiate their accusations, and this document, which I have seen, is still in the Pretorian Palace; but in my opinion it is extremely suspicious, and I do not hesitate to pronounce it fictitious."

Banished and calumniated again and again, in company with his fellow-exiles he tried to effect his return by means of conspiracies and expeditions, but all failed, and he separated from his co-conspirators an embittered and disappointed man. Wrath and thirst for vengeance transformed the man, the citizen, the poet. The author of the *Vita Nuova*, "to whom no enemy remained," "whose frame was pervaded by a thrill of charity, which led him to pardon all who had offended him," became the author of the *Inferno*. The sweet singer of Beatrice is transmuted into the terrible painter of Farinata and Ugolino; the timid lover who, at the sight of Bice, "felt an exquisite tremor in his bosom," now drags with inexorable hand the past and present generations down into the depths of hell, "into the whirlwind that is never still," "into the hailstorm of fire," into the "eternal ice of Antenora." Here he deposits all his enemies, all who were hostile to him on earth—men, peoples, cities—in no gentle fashion either, as he himself tells us. "Then I seized him by his after-scalp and cried, Either thou dost name thyself, or here I leave thee not a single hair."

He seems to assume the office and authority of God; accuses, judges, condemns, creates the places and assigns the degrees of punishment, and writes on the gates of the awful prison—"Abandon every hope, O ye who enter." The sentences passed by Dante are indelible in a quite other sense than that pronounced and signed by Cante de' Gabrielli da Gubbio, Podesta of Florence. Hearty thanks are due to this Cante de' Gabrielli, and to the

Neri faction, for having torn Dante from the pleasures of his native city, and from his home; since, had not his genius been sharpened by sorrow, his soul tempered by misfortune, his brain stimulated by a sense of injustice, his heart stirred by persecution, never would he have produced his immortal tragedy.

His exile lasted eighteen years. In canto xvii. of *Paradise* his ancestor Cacciaguidi foretells his fate:—

Thou shalt prove how salt will taste
The strangers' bread; how hard it is
To ascend and descend by other people's stairs.

In the *Convito* he tells us:—"Wheresoever this tongue is spoken I have wandered, almost begging; showing, against my will, the wounds of fate, which are often unjustly imputed as faults to the sufferers. Verily I have been as a vessel without sails or helm, driven hither and thither to ports and straits and shores by adverse winds, which rise from sad poverty, and thus I appeared in the eyes of many who, owing perhaps to a certain fame acquired, had formed a very different idea of me; hence not only was my person depreciated, but the work I had accomplished and that yet unfinished were less esteemed."

Exile, the injustice endured, and thirst for revenge modified Dante's political opinions materially. He ceased to be a Guelph without becoming a Ghibelline—the change being far more radical, since he substituted a belief in monarchy for his republican creed. Ghibellinism did not exclude a republican form of government—the republics of Pisa and Arezzo were Ghibelline; whereas Dante wrote a treatise on monarchy, in which he affirms that its existence is necessary to the happiness of mankind, points to the Roman people as its fountain head, to the King of the Romans, i. e. the Emperor, as its representative, and traces its immediate origin from God without the Pope's intervention. As a unitarian and partisan of centralization he hurled anathemas at all autonomous cities and provinces; calls Florence "an accursed ditch," Pisa "the refuse of cities," Lucca "a nest of vipers," Genoa "indecent and full of every vice," Pistoja "fit only to be reduced to ashes," Treviso "full of traitors," Romagna "full of poisonous serpents and of bodies animated by demons," Puglia "of cowardly soldiers," Citaja "of madmen," Bologna "of panders," Arezzo "of dogs," Lombardy "fit for such as cannot for very shame consort with good men, and where not three educated men can be found;" and in a letter he speaks of Venice in the following terms:—"Truly a wretched and ill-mannered mob, insolently oppressed, shamefully governed, and cruelly taxed: how can I, O Signore, express the gross ignorance of these grave, venerable fathers? When I found myself in the presence of this grey-bearded and aged assembly, I naturally wished to fulfil my mission and communicate your message in the Latin tongue. Hardly had I pronounced my exordium when they sent to beg me either to seek an interpreter or to speak in another language. Half-astonished, half-indignant (I can hardly tell which sentiment

predominated), I began to say something in that tongue which I first lisped in swaddling-clothes, and even this scarcely sounded more natural or familiar to their ears than Latin. This ought not to surprise us, seeing that they know not how to speak Italian, because, descended from Grecian and Dalmatian ancestors, their only inheritance, brought to this most fertile soil, is made up of the lowest and most indecent habits, together with the dregs of every vice."

Allowing himself to be carried away by his new monarchical, imperial, and centralizing convictions, he writes, in the *Convito*, his greatest prose work:—"In order to bring human life to perfection, imperial authority was devised; this is the guide and rule of all our operations, so that if one wish to describe the office of the emperor by a symbol, one might say that he is the rider of human will, and it is sufficiently evident that the horse often wanders wild without his rider, especially in this wretched Italy, which has been left without any sort of guidance." During the first years of his exile, impelled by his yearning to return to Florence, and by his burning thirst for vengeance on the Neri, he sought partisans among the Ghibelline chiefs, and visited certain persons who were for waging war on Florence. But, depressed by one failure after another, his spirit was tempered to more peaceful aspirations and vaster designs. Then it was that he dreamed of a German Caesar in Rome, the concentration of the petty Italian republics and principalities in one United Italy, and of the unity of the human race as of a circle round a centre. Thus he set his hopes first on Albert of Austria, and afterwards far more firmly on Henry of Luxemburg, to whom he wrote letters, and whom he urged to enter Florence in person. Now it is that the serenity of the Utopian prevails over the ire of the partisan. "Rejoice to-day, O Italy," he writes, "for thy spouse, who is the joy of the age and the glory of thy people, the most clement Henry hastens to thy bridal: dry thy tears, O fairest one, and hide the signs of grief; since he is nigh who will liberate thee from prison and free thee from the wicked. Forgive! forgive to-day, O beloved ones, who have suffered injuries, even as I have suffered, so that the chosen Shepherd may know thee for lambs of his fold. For although, by divine permission, he holds in his hand the rod of temporal punishment, yet, because he resembles Him from whom, as from one root, branches the power of Peter and of Caesar, he chastises his flock, yet far more gladly shows mercy unto them."

Investive is succeeded by idyll; reconciliation, forgiveness, oblivion, take the place of vengeance. Gradually as the tempestuous politician calms down, the poet also grows calmer: he sings—"To ride o'er gentler waves, the slight bark of my genius spreads her sails, leaving behind the cruel sea." He had already reached the mount of Purgatory, "where the human spirit becomes worthy of ascending to Heaven." Even the new edict of death issued against him, and against his children by his fellow-citizens, did not distract him. Yet once again he returned to the consideration of mundane things, when Florence offered a pardon to the exiles, on the

condition of "paying a certain sum, of wearing a degrading mitre on their heads, and, wax-taper in hand, with abject and contrite mien, marching in procession behind the car of the Mint, and thus entering into the church of S. Giovanni, there to expiate their crimes by an offering to the saint." Writing to a friend in Florence, whom he calls *Pater*, he says,—
 "From your letters, received in the spirit of reverence and affection which they merit, I have gathered with thoughtfulness and gratitude all your anxiety for my return home; and I have been all the more touched by them because it is so rare for exiles to meet with friends. I now reply to their contents, and if I cannot do that which the pusillanimity of some would wish, I affectionately pray that a careful examination of my motives may precede your sentence. The letters of your and my nephews, and of other friends, inform me that, in virtue of the decree concerning the exiles recently issued in Florence, if I choose to pay a certain sum of money, and suffer the shame of a fine, I may obtain absolution and return at once. In these propositions there are, to speak plainly, two things, O *Pater*, which are ridiculous and ill-advised. I apply the word ill-advised to those who informed me of them, since you in your wiser and more prudent letter do not once refer to them.

"Is this, then, the glorious path by which Dante Alighieri is recalled to his country after the sufferings of an exile which has lasted almost fifteen years? Is this the reward of his innocence clear to all? This the result of the sweat and toil endured in his studies? Far from the man who has made Philosophy his friend be such baseness; worthy only of a degraded heart to consent, even as a certain Ciolo, and other men of ill-fame, to be ransomed like a prisoner! Far be it from the man, the apostle of justice—the man insulted and offended—to pay a tribute to his offenders, even as though they were his benefactors.

"This is not the road by which to return to our country, O my father; but if you or others find a path which will not stain Dante's honour, he will accept it immediately. But if there be no honourable path to Florence, he will never enter into Florence. What! can I not behold the sun and stars from every corner of the earth? Can I not meditate on sweetest truth from every region under heaven, if I do not by my own act strip myself of every glory—ay, render myself ignominious to the people and city of Florence? Bread at least will not be wanting."

So, following in the footsteps of his Beatrice, he consecrated the last four years of his life to the canticles of *Paradise*. Then reclining his weary head on the immortal book, with, perhaps, a last sigh for Florence—for him "empty of charity and void of love," yet never by him forgotten—he died.

Towards the end of May, just after the centenary festival, the bones of Dante were discovered at a short distance from the tomb where, since 1621, they were supposed to lie, and now await from Italy a worthy sepulchre.

During the May festival an interesting and valuable collection of the rarest MSS. and editions of the poem was exhibited in the hall of the Palazzo Pretorio, the oldest public palace of Florence, recently restored to its primitive form, almost as it existed in Alighieri's time. The place was worthy of the collection of 204 editions of the *Divine Comedy*, 32 translations in various tongues and dialects, 12 separate commentaries, 28 editions of the minor works, 65 copies of different illustrations of the *Life and Works of Dante*, 48 manuscripts of the *Divine Comedy*, with the date, belonging to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; 182 of the same epoch without date, and hundreds of manuscript commentaries and documents relating to Dante, to his age, or to eminent personages mentioned in the poem. Space forbids us touching on more than a very few specimens of this collection.

The first editions of the *Comedy* were printed in Fuligno in 1472, by Giovanni Numeister, and in that same year other three were issued in Jesi, Mantua, and Naples. The British Museum possesses a copy of each, and the only existing copy of the Neapolitan edition, abstracted from the Magliabecchiana library in Florence. Lord Vernon, the famous Dantofilo, published them all at his own expense (in one volume) in facsimile; and the book, edited by Panizzi, figures in the Pretorian exposition. Five copies of the Fuligno edition are to be seen there belonging to the Magliabecchiana, Laurenziana, and Palatina libraries of Florence, to Count Orfini of Fuligno, and to the Marquis Trivulzio of Milan. The edition is in small folio, the pages are not numbered.

Comparing these copies with the two in the British Museum, it is evident two editions must have been printed at the same time, since in some we find errors which are corrected in others. For instance, in the Laurenziana (*Inferno*, canto iii. line 68) we read, "*Poscia ch'io ebbi alcun riconosciuto*," and in all the others *Pocia*. Again, at line 68, in the Laurenziana and Magliabecchiana, "*A Dio spiacente ed a nemici sui*," and in all the others *dispiacente*. Panizzi remarks that in the copy belonging to the Duc d'Anmale in line 58 occurs *recognosciuto* instead of *recognosciuto*, and elsewhere *cogliochi* instead of *con gli occhi*, *arriva* instead of *alla riva*, and several other errors only to be found in the Palatina copy.

The Jesi edition is extremely rare, and was printed four months after that of Fuligno by Federico Veronese. "Explicit: Liber Dantis impressus a Magistro Federico Veronese M.CCCC.LXXII. quintodecimo a Lendas Augusti. In folio piccolo." The copy exhibited belongs to the Trivulzian library in Milan; it is complete and in good condition, the frontispiece only missing. In the copy of the British Museum several pages are missing; six have been copied by Mr. Harris from one belonging to Lord Spencer, and from another incomplete copy pages 214-16 have been taken; still three are missing altogether. The Mantuan edition contents with that of Fuligno the rights of primogeniture. "*Dantis Aligerii poëta Florentini Inferni capitulum incipit*," stands at the begin-

ning; and at the end, "Magister Georgius et magister Paulus, Teutonici, hoc opus Mantuæ in præsserunt, adiuvante Columbino Veronensi." Two copies belonging to the national library of Naples and to the Trivulzian are exhibited. The second, rich in arabesques and miniatures, contains a dedication from Colombini, the printer, to Nuvoloni, a Mantuan gentleman, which is wanting in that of Naples. Neither of these copies have been seen by Panizzi, who, in the preface to Lord Vernon's volume, says that he only knows of those belonging to the British Museum, to the Royal Society, and to Lord Spencer.

Only in the Fuligno edition do we find the arguments placed at the head of each canto, and according to Professor Quirico Viani this one adheres closer than any of the old editions to the best texts.

Typographically speaking, the Jesi edition is the best, but less correct than any other; the most correct of all is that of Mantua. According to Panizzi, the value of these first editions "consists in their pointing out how the pronunciation has been altered, in giving us the etymology of certain words, and the primary signification of many others."

After these earliest editions figure the Neapolitan of 1477, in folio, sent by the library of the Neapolitan University, printed by Mattia Morano; that of Vindelino da Spira, sent by the Ricciardana library, with comments by Jacopo della Lana, Bolognese, 1477, erroneously attributed to Benvenuto da Imola, at the commencement of which is printed, for the first time, Boccaccio's Life of Dante; the Milanese edition, sent by the Brera Library, printed on parchment, in 1478; and especially the Florentine edition in folio, printed by Lorenzo della Magna in 1481, with the commentaries of Cristoforo Landini, sent by the Magliabecchiana. The copy exhibited is a splendid volume presented by Landini to the Signoria of Florence, in return for which gift the learned commentator received a tower of the Castello di Borgo, in Collieria, his birthplace in Casentino.

The edition of Della Magna is the first printed in Florence; Landini's, the only one printed on parchment. In that of the Imperial Library in Paris several pages are missing, many are only printed on one side, and nearly all are defective. The poem is preceded by Landini's comments and by a Life of Dante, and by considerations on the excellence of the Florentines in arts and letters, on the site, form, and personages of the *Inferno*, on the stature of Giants and of Lucifer. The miniatures which adorn the Proemio, the three canticles (and especially the first), are wrought with a delicacy and good taste worthy of Perugino. The binding is in the olden style, the corners bound with silver clasps representing the years of the Florentine Republic, and with two medals in the centre of the cover, on which are engraved the figure of Hercules, the seal of the Republic, and Marzocco holding in his claws the banner of the Giglio.

The Venetian edition of Quarenghi, 1497, contains marginal notes by Tassoni. The Venetian edition of Ferrari, 1556, is the first in which the title of *Divina Commedia*, appears on the frontispiece, while

the Venetian edition of the *Convito*, 1521, is copiously annotated by Torquato Tasso.

Among the modern editions of the comedy three stand unrivalled; *i.e.*, the three printed expressly for the festival destined to commemorate the six-hundredth anniversary of the poet's birth—that of Bologna under the superintendence of Professor Scarabelli, with commentaries by Jacopo della Lana—that of Mantua by Pietro Rossi, 1865, a typographical chef-d'œuvre from every point of view, and the Cassinese of 1864, which is the first edition printed from the famous text of the Comedy preserved in Montecassino.

This edition is ornamented with photographic facsimiles of the text, and of other writings of the earliest ages existing in the Cassinese archives—which are useful for comparison. It seems to have been commenced during the first half of the thirteenth century; the writing, the orthography, and certain comments in the margin, all conduce to this supposition. The text is written on vellum, which was in use as early as the tenth century, and especially towards the first half of the fourteenth. Its darkish tint, its weight, quality, and form are identical with a legal document of 1310, which exists in the Cassinese archives. The writing of the marginal comments seems the same as that of some manuscript sermons written in April, 1326, by Ambrogio di Castello. It differs from the rough Longobard writing, with its long irregular strokes, and resembles the square ancian writing of the Romans. None of the *i*'s are dotted, the dot being first used towards the end of the fourteenth century; and the words flow into each other, as is the case with all the writings of that epoch. Two historical proofs also determine its date. The commentator, speaking of the death of Thomas Aquinas, poisoned by Charles d'Anjou, says, "that his corpse lies at Fasanova," where we know that it was first buried, though in 1368 it was transported to Tolosa. Again, in his explanations of line 36 of canto xxxiii. *Purgatory*—

Che vendetta di Dio non teme suppe,

he refers to a Florentine superstition still extant in his day, which led the relations of a murdered man to guard the tomb lest the murderers should come *mangiare la suppa*, or to feast thereon. We know from Benvenuto da Imola, and from Dante's son, who flourished in 1386, that this practice had then fallen into disuse.

The paleographic observations on the Cassinese MSS. apply equally to the magnificent MSS. of the Palatine library of Florence, exhibited in the Bargello, which, for antiquity, bears the palm from all the rest, since it is anterior to 1333, hence anterior to Landini's of 1336, to the Trivulziana of 1387, and to the Cassinese, whose date can only be fixed by induction, ever open to error.

The one in the Palatina is probably the MSS. belonging to Luca Martini in 1339, seen by Basilio Valori in 1645, and thought to be lost. It is evidently anterior to 1333, because, unlike the others on record, it is

written in two volumes, and the verses each occupy two lines. Its date is also determined by a historical proof. The commentator, who is also the writer of the MSS., in order to explain the following lines—

E se non fosse che in sul passo d'Arno,
Rimase ancor di lui (Marte) alcuna vista (his statue),
(*Inferno*, canto xiii. lines 145-46)—

writes—"Dopo il decto mutamento neente meno una statua di Marte rimase in sullo vecchio Ponte de la decta cittade, la quale statua tirovinoe nel fiume d'Arno, e per molti anni in quello stette, in fra 'l quale molte schonfite ricevette dai vicini la decta cittade. Poi dopo anni molti fue ritrovata e dritta al decto Ponte, et per consilgio d'alchuno astrologho edirecta la cittade in mcliori provvedimenti che chonsilgio que quella statua si ritrovasse et riponessesi nel luogho dov' ella è anchora." Now Villani (*Cronaca*, lib. xi. cap. 1) bears witness that in the flood of 1333 the statue of Mars was again hurled into the Arno, and lost for ever.

The Landiano MSS. of Piacenza is also very valuable. It bears the written date of 1336, and hence stands second to the Palatina. Its priority is further confirmed by the fact that Antonio Delfino was commissioned to write it by Beccario Beccheria of Pavia, who was Podesta of Genoa, sub anno Domini Mill° ccc.xxxvi. We read this declaration at the head of the canticle of *Paradise*. Comparing the Landiano manuscript with the Cominiana edition of the *Divine Comedy*, 1727, we meet with 306 variations, many of which are valuable as corrections; take, for instance, the 59th line of the fifth canto of *Hell*,

Che succedette a Nino e fù sua sposa.

The Landiano MSS. runs *che succe dette*, and means "who gave suck." And in truth Semiramide, of whom the poet speaks, was both mother and wife of Nino, and for this is condemned to the circle of lust. The *succedette* of Cominiana and the rest is an absurdity.

"We will only add that not a single page of Dante's own writing remains to us; not even his signature. From Leonardo Aretino we know that his writing was *magra, lunga, e molto corretta*. It is strange to say that in the 178 manuscripts exhibited in the Bargello, and in the 236 editions—if we except Foscolo's, printed in London, 1842, by Pietro Rolandi—none of the volumes bear the title placed by Dante at the head of the poem in his dedication of *Paradise* to *Cane della Scala*.

Incipit comedia
Dantis Allagherii,
Florentini natione,
Non moribus.

We have not even his picture. The pretended picture of Dante attributed by Vasari to Giotto, and discovered in 1840 by Antonio Marini, is not by Giotto at all. Vasari took the idea from Filippo Villani, who, according to Vasari, wrote that Giotto "also painted a portrait of himself by means of a mirror, and of his contemporary Dante Alighieri, the poet, in a picture of a public festival in the chapel of the

Podesta on the wall (*in muro*)," whereas what Villani did write was, "on the altar table (*sulla tavola dell' altare*).". Of this *tavola* we know nothing later than 1382, and on the wall, by the side of the pretended portrait of Dante, we find no portrait of Giotto. Moreover, we know that the roof of the Pretorian Palace, or palace of the Podesta, was destroyed by fire in 1382, and replaced by the present vaulted roof. The fire and the masons would have destroyed the fresco on the wall if painted before 1382. Again, a document exists, which informs us that the walls of the palace were painted in 1387, when Varano was Podesta, and Giotto had then been dead six months, and Dante sixteen years; besides, the portrait in the chapel is said to have been painted when he was fifteen and wrote the sonnet to Guido and Lapo.

No portrait remains to us save the one given by Boccaccio :—"This poet of ours was of middle stature, and when he arrived at mature age he stooped slightly; his step was firm and stately; he wore the simplest dress suited to his age; his face was long, his nose aquiline, his eyes large rather than small, his jaws large, his under lip protruding beyond the upper, his complexion clear, his hair and beard massive, black, and curly; his countenance ever melancholy and thoughtful." But even this is not a perfect portrait, because in his Latin *Egloga*, in reply to his friend Giovanni de Virgilio Bolognese, who invited him to Bologna to receive the poet's crown, he says himself that his hair was fair. "Were it not better that I crown and cover not under the triumphal wreath the hair which on the Arno's banks was fair, but which, if I return to my native land, will then be grey?"



OH MOLLY MOLLY COME AND JUDGE BEVERLY'S

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER, 1865.

Widows and Daughters.

AN EVERY DAY STORY.

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CHAPTER XL.

GATHERING CLOUDS



MRS. GIBSON came back full of rose-coloured accounts of London. Lady Cumnor had been gracious and affectionate, "so touched by my going up to see her, so soon after her return to England," Lady Harriet charming and devoted to her old governess, Lord Cumnor "just like his dear usual hearty self," and as for the Kirkpatricks, no Lord Chancellor's house was ever grander than theirs, and the silk gown of the Q. C. had floated over housemaids and footmen. Cynthia, too, was so much admired; and as for her dress, Mrs. Kirkpatrick had showered down ball-dresses

and wreaths, and pretty bonnets and mantles, like a fairy godmother. Mr. Gibson's poor present of ten pounds shrank into very small dimensions compared with all this munificence.

"And they're so fond of her, I don't know when we shall have her back," was Mrs. Gibson's winding-up sentence. "And now, Molly, what have you and papa been doing? Very gay, you sounded in your letter.

I had not time to read it in London ; so I put it in my pocket, and read it in the coach coming home. But, my dear child, you do look so old-fashioned with your gown made all tight, and your hair all tumbling about in curls. Curls are quite gone out. We must do your hair differently," she continued, trying to smooth Molly's black waves into straightness.

"I sent Cynthia an African letter," said Molly, timidly. "Did you hear anything of what was in it?"

"Oh, yes, poor child! It made her very uneasy, I think; she said she did not feel inclined to go to Mr. Rawson's ball, which was on that night, and for which Mrs. Kirkpatrick had given her the ball-dress. But there really was nothing for her to fidget herself about. Roger only said he had had another touch of fever, but was better when he wrote. He says every European has to be acclimatized by fever in that part of Abyssinia where he is."

"And did she go?" asked Molly.

"Yes, to be sure. It is not an engagement; and if it were, it is not acknowledged. Fancy her going and saying, 'A young man that I know' has been ill for a few days in Africa, two months ago, therefore I don't want to go to the ball to-night.' It would have seemed like affectation of sentiment; and if there's one thing I hate it is that."

"She would hardly enjoy herself," said Molly.

"Oh, yes, but she did. Her dress was white gauze, trimmed with lilacs, and she really did look—a mother may be allowed a little natural partiality—most lovely. And she danced every dance, although she was quite a stranger. I am sure she enjoyed herself, from her manner of talking about it next morning."

"I wonder if the squire knows."

"Knows what? Oh, yes, to be sure! You mean about Roger. I dare say he doesn't, and there's no need to tell him, for I've no doubt it is all right now." And she went out of the room to finish her unpacking.

Molly let her work fall, and sighed. "It will be a year the day after to-morrow since he came here to propose our going to Hurst Wood, and mamma was so vexed at his calling before lunch. I wonder if Cynthia remembers it as well as I do. And now, perhaps— Oh! Roger, Roger! I wish—I pray that you were safe home again! How could we all bear it, if——"

She covered her face with her hands, and tried to stop thinking. Suddenly she got up, as if stung by a venomous fancy.

"I don't believe she loves him as she ought, or she could not—could not have gone and danced. What shall I do if she does not? What shall I do? I can bear anything but that."

But she found the long suspense as to his health hard enough to endure. They were not likely to hear from him for a month at least, and before that time had elapsed Cynthia would be at home again. Molly learnt to long for her return before a fortnight of her absence was over.

She had had no idea that perpetual tête-à-têtes with Mrs. Gibson could, by any possibility, be so tiresome as she found them. Perhaps Molly's state of delicate health, consequent upon her rapid growth during the last few months, made her irritable; but really often she had to get up and leave the room to calm herself down after listening to a long series of words, more frequently plaintive or discontented in tone than cheerful, and which at the end conveyed no distinct impression of either the speaker's thought or feeling. Whenever anything had gone wrong, whenever Mr. Gibson had coolly persevered in anything to which she had objected; whenever the cook had made a mistake about the dinner, or the housemaid broken any little frangible article; whenever Molly's hair was not done to her liking, or her dress did not become her, or the smell of dinner pervaded the house, or the wrong callers came, or the right callers did not come—in fact, whenever anything went wrong, poor Mr. Kirkpatrick was regretted and mourned over, nay, almost blamed, as if, had he only given himself the trouble of living, he could have helped it.

"When I look back to those happy days, it seems to me as if I had never valued them as I ought. To be sure—youth, love,—what did we care for poverty! I remember dear Mr. Kirkpatrick walking five miles into Stratford to buy me a muffin because I had such a fancy for one after Cynthia was born. I don't mean to complain of dear papa—but I don't think—but, perhaps I ought not to say it to you. If Mr. Kirkpatrick had but taken care of that cough of his; but he was so obstinate! Men always are, I think. And it really was selfish of him. Only I dare say he did not consider the forlorn state in which I should be left. It came harder upon me than upon most people, because I always was of such an affectionate sensitive nature. I remember a little poem of Mr. Kirkpatrick's in which he compared my heart to a harp-string, vibrating to the slightest breeze."

"I thought harp-strings required a pretty strong finger to make them sound," said Molly.

"My dear child, you've no more poetry in you than your father. And as for your hair! it's worse than ever. Can't you drench it in water to take those untidy twists and twirls out of it?"

"It only makes it curl more and more when it gets dry," said Molly, sudden tears coming into her eyes as a recollection came before her like a picture seen long ago and forgotten—for years—a young mother washing and dressing her little girl; placing the half-naked darling on her knee, and twining the wet rings of dark hair fondly round her fingers, and then, in an ecstasy of fondness, kissing the little curly head.

The receipt of Cynthia's letters made very agreeable events. She did not write often, but her letters were tolerably long when they did come, and very sprightly in tone. There was constant mention made of many new names, which conveyed no idea to Molly, though Mrs. Gibson would try and enlighten her by running commentaries like the following:—

"Mrs. Green! ah, that's Mr. Jones's pretty cousin, who lives in

Russell Square with the fat husband. They keep their carriage; but I'm not sure if it is not Mr. Green who is Mrs. Jones's cousin. We can ask Cynthia when she comes home. Mr. Henderson! to be sure—a young man with black whiskers, a pupil of Mr. Kirkpatrick's formerly,—or was he a pupil of Mr. Murray's? I know they said he had read law with somebody. Ah, yes! they are the people who called the day after Mr. Rawson's ball, and who admired Cynthia so much, without knowing I was her mother. She was very handsomely dressed indeed, in black satin; and the son had a glass eye, but he was a young man of good property. Coleman! yes, that was the name."

No more news of Roger until some time after Cynthia had returned from her London visit. She came back looking fresher and prettier than ever, beautifully dressed, thanks to her own good taste, and her cousin's generosity, full of amusing details of the gay life she had been enjoying, yet not at all out of spirits at having left it behind her. She brought home all sorts of pretty and dainty devices for Molly; a neck ribbon made up in the newest fashion, a pattern for a tippet, a delicate pair of tight gloves embroidered as Molly had never seen gloves embroidered before, and many another little sign of remembrance during her absence. Yet somehow or other, Molly felt that Cynthia was changed in her relation to her. Molly was aware that she had never had Cynthia's full confidence, for with all her apparent frankness and *naiveté* of manner, Cynthia was extremely reserved and reticent. She knew this much of herself, and had often laughed about it to Molly, and the latter had found out the truth of her friend's assertion for herself. But Molly did not trouble herself much about this. She too knew that there were many thoughts and feelings that flitted through her mind that she should never think of telling to any one, except perhaps—if they were ever very much thrown together—to her father. She knew that Cynthia withheld from her more than thoughts and feelings—that she withheld facts. But then, as Molly reflected, these facts might involve details of struggle and suffering, might relate to her mother's neglect, and altogether be of so painful a character, that it would be well if Cynthia could forget her childhood altogether, instead of fixing it in her mind by the relation of her grievances and troubles. So it was not now by any want of confidence that Molly felt distanced as it were. It was because Cynthia rather avoided than sought her companionship; because her eyes shunned the straight, serious, loving look of Molly's; because there were certain subjects on which she evidently disliked speaking, not particularly interesting things as far as Molly could perceive, but it almost seemed as if they lay on the road to points to be avoided. Molly felt a sort of sighing pleasure in noticing Cynthia's changed manner of talking about Roger. She spoke of him tenderly now; "poor Roger," as she called him; and Molly thought that she must be referring to the illness which he had mentioned in his last letter. One morning in the first week after Cynthia's return home, just as he was going out, Mr. Gibson ran up into the drawing-room, booted and spurred,

and hastily laid an open pamphlet down before her; pointing out a particular passage with his finger, but not speaking a word before he rapidly quitted the room. His eyes were sparkling, and had an amused as well as pleased expression. All this Molly noticed, as well as Cynthia's flush of colour as she read what was thus pointed out to her. Then she pushed it a little on one side, not closing the book however, and went on with her work.

"What is it? may I see it?" asked Molly, stretching out her hand for the pamphlet, which lay within her reach. But she did not take it until Cynthia had said—

"Certainly, I don't suppose there are any great secrets in a scientific journal, full of reports of meetings." And she gave the book a little push towards Molly.

"Oh, Cynthia!" said Molly, catching her breath as she read, "Are you not proud?" For it was an account of an annual gathering of the Geographical Society, and Lord Hollingsford had read a letter he had received from Roger Hamley, dated from Arracuoba, a district in Africa, hitherto unvisited by any intelligent European traveller; and about which, Mr. Hamley sent many curious particulars. The reading of this letter had been received with the greatest interest, and several subsequent speakers had paid the writer very high compliments.

But Molly might have known Cynthia better than to expect an answer responsive to the feelings that prompted her question. Let Cynthia be ever so proud, ever so glad, or so grateful, or even indignant, remorseful, grievous or sorry, the very fact that she was expected by another to entertain any of these emotions, would have been enough to prevent her expressing them.

"I'm afraid I'm not as much struck by the wonder of the thing as you are, Molly. Besides, it is not news to me; at least, not entirely. I heard about the meeting before I left London; it was a good deal talked about in my uncle's set; to be sure I did not hear all the fine things they say of him there—but there, you know, that's a mere fashion of speaking, which means nothing; somebody is bound to pay compliments when a lord takes the trouble to read one of his letters aloud."

"Nonsense," said Molly. "You know you don't believe what you are saying, Cynthia."

Cynthia gave that pretty little jerk of her shoulders, which was her equivalent for a French shrug, but did not lift up her head from her sewing. Molly began to read the report over again.

"Why, Cynthia!" she said, "you might have been there; ladies were there. It says 'many ladies were present.' Oh, could not you have managed to go? If your uncle's set cared about these things, would not some of them have taken you?"

"Perhaps, if I had asked them. But I think they would have been rather astonished at my sudden turn for science."

"You might have told your uncle how matters really stood, he would

not have talked about it if you had wished him not, I am sure, and he could have helped you."

"Once for all, Molly," said Cynthia, now laying down her work, and speaking with quick authority, "do learn to understand that it is, and always has been my wish, not to have the relation which Roger and I bear to each other, mentioned or talked about. When the right time comes, I will make it known to my uncle, and to everybody whom it may concern; but I am not going to make mischief, and get myself into trouble—even for the sake of hearing compliments paid to him—by letting it out before the time. If I'm pushed to it, I'd sooner break it off altogether at once, and have done with it. I can't be worse off than I am now." Her angry tone had changed into a kind of desponding complaint before she had ended her sentence. Molly looked at her with dismay.

"I can't understand you, Cynthia," she said at length.

"No; I dare say you can't," said Cynthia, looking at her with tears in her eyes, and very tenderly, as if in atonement for her late vehemence. "I am afraid—I hope you never will."

In a moment, Molly's arms were round her. "Oh, Cynthia," she murmured, "have I been plaguing you? Have I vexed you? Don't say you're afraid of my knowing you. Of course you've your faults, everybody has, but I think I love you the better for them."

"I don't know that I'm so very bad," said Cynthia, smiling a little through the tears that Molly's words and caresses had forced to overflow from her eyes. "But I have got into scrapes. I am in a scrape now. I do sometimes believe I shall always be in scrapes, and if they ever come to light, I shall seem to be worse than I really am; and I know your father will throw me off, and I—no, I won't be afraid that you will, Molly."

"I'm sure I won't. Are they—do you think—how would Roger take it?" asked Molly, very timidly.

"I don't know. I hope he will never hear of it. I don't see why he should, for in a little while I shall be quite clear again. It all came about without my ever thinking I was doing wrong. I've a great mind to tell you all about it, Molly."

Molly did not like to urge it, though she longed to know, and to see if she could not offer help; but while Cynthia was hesitating, and perhaps, to say the truth, rather regretting that she had even made this slight advance towards bestowing her confidence, Mrs. Gibson came in, full of some manner of altering a gown of hers, so as to make it into the fashion of the day, as she had seen it during her visit to London. Cynthia seemed to forget her tears and her troubles, and to throw her whole soul into millinery.

Cynthia's correspondence went on pretty briskly with her London cousins, according to the usual rate of correspondence in those days. Indeed Mrs. Gibson was occasionally inclined to complain of the frequency of Helen Kirkpatrick's letters; for before the penny post came in, the

recipient had to pay the postage of letters ; and elevenpence-halfpenny three times a week came, according to Mrs. Gibson's mode of reckoning when annoyed, to a sum "between three and four shillings." But these complaints were only for the family ; they saw the wrong side of the tapestry. Hollingford in general, Miss Brownings in particular, heard of "dear Helen's enthusiastic friendship for Cynthia" and of "the real pleasure it was to receive such constant news—relays of news indeed—from London. It was almost as good as living there !"

"A great deal better I should think," said Miss Browning with some severity. For she had got many of her notions of the metropolis from the British Essayists, where town is so often represented as the centre of dissipation, corrupting country wives and squires' daughters, and unfitting them for all their duties by the constant whirl of its not always innocent pleasures. London was a sort of moral pitch, which few could touch and not be defiled. Miss Browning had been on the watch for the signs of deterioration in Cynthia's character ever since her return home. But, excepting in a greater number of pretty and becoming articles of dress, there was no great change for the worse to be perceived. Cynthia had been "in the world," had "beheld the glare and glitter and dazzling display of London," yet had come back to Hollingford as ready as ever to place a chair for Miss Browning, or to gather flowers for a nosegay for Miss Phæbe, or to mend her own clothes. But all this was set down to the merits of Cynthia, not to the credit of London-town.

"As far as I can judge of London," said Miss Browning, sententiously continuing her tirade against the place, "it's no better than a pickpocket and a robber dressed up in the spoils of honest folk. I should like to know where my Lord Hollingford was bred, and Mr. Roger Hamley. Your good husband lent me that report of the meeting, Mrs. Gibson, where so much was said about them both, and he was as proud of their praises as if he had been akin to them, and Phæbe read it aloud to me, for the print was too small for my eyes ; she was a good deal perplexed with all the new names of places, but I said she had better skip them all, for we had never heard of them before and probably should never hear of them again, but she read out the fine things they said of my lord, and Mr. Roger, and I put it to you, where were they born and bred ? Why, within eight miles of Hollingford ; it might have been Molly there or me ; it's all a chance ; and then they go and talk about the pleasures of intellectual society in London, and the distinguished people up there that it is such an advantage to know, and all the time I know it's only shops and the play that's the real attraction. But that's neither here nor there. We all put our best foot foremost, and if we have a reason to give that looks sensible we speak it out like men, and never say anything about the silliness we are hugging to our heart. But I ask you again, where does this fine society come from, and these wise men, and these distinguished travellers ? Why, out of country parishes like this ! London picks

'em all up, and decks herself with them, and then calls out to the folks she's robbed, and says, 'Come and see how fine I am.' Fine, indeed ! I've no patience with London : Cynthia is much better out of it ; and I'm not sure, if I were you, Mrs. Gibson, if I would not stop up those London letters : they'll only be unsettling her."

"But perhaps she may live in London some of these days, Miss Browning," simpered Mrs. Gibson.

"Time enough then to be thinking of London. I wish her a honest country husband with enough to live upon, and a little to lay by, and a good character to boot. Mind that, Molly," said she, firing round upon the startled Molly, "I wish Cynthia a husband with a good character ; but she's got a mother to look after her ; you've none and when your mother was alive she was a dear friend of mine : so I'm not going to let you throw yourself away upon any one whose life is not clear and above-board, you may depend upon it."

This last speech fell like a bomb into the quiet little drawing-room, it was delivered with such vehemence. Miss Browning, in her secret heart, meant it as a warning against the intimacy she believed that Molly had formed with Mr. Preston ; but as it happened, that Molly had never dreamed of any such intimacy, the girl could not imagine why such severity of speech should be addressed to her. Mrs. Gibson, who always took up the points of every word or action where they touched her own self (and called it sensitiveness), broke the silence that followed Miss Browning's speech by saying, plaintively,—

"I'm sure, Miss Browning, you are very much mistaken if you think that any mother could take more care of Molly than I do. I don't—I can't think there is any need for any one to interfere to protect her, and I have not an idea why you have been talking in this way, just as if we were all wrong, and you were all right. It hurts my feelings, indeed it does ; for Molly can tell you there is not a thing or a favour that Cynthia has, that she has not. And as for not taking care of her, why, if she were to go up to London to-morrow, I should make a point of going with her to see after her ; and I never did it for Cynthia when she was at school in France ; and her bedroom is furnished just like Cynthia's, and I let her wear my red shawl whenever she likes, she might have it oftener if she would. I can't think what you mean, Miss Browning."

"I did not mean to offend you, but I meant just to give Molly a hint. She understands what I mean."

"I'm sure I do not," said Molly, boldly. "I have not a notion what you meant, if you were alluding to anything more than you said straight out ; that you do not wish me to marry any one who has not a good character, and that, as you were a friend of mamma's, you would prevent my marrying a man with a bad character, by every means in your power. I'm not thinking of marrying ; I don't want to marry anybody at all—but if I did, and he were not a good man, I should thank you for coming and warning me of it."

"I shall not stand on warning you, Molly. I shall forbid the banns in church, if need be," said Miss Browning, half convinced of the clear transparent truth of what Molly had said; blushing all over, it is true, but with her steady eyes fixed on Miss Browning's face while she spoke.

"Do!" said Molly.

"Well, well, I won't say any more. Perhaps I was mistaken. We won't say any more about it. But remember what I have said, Molly, there's no harm in that, at any rate. I'm sorry I hurt your feelings, Mrs. Gibson. As stepmothers go, I think you try and do your duty. Good morning. Good-by to you both, and God bless you."

If Miss Browning thought that her final blessing would secure peace in the room she was leaving, she was very much mistaken; Mrs. Gibson burst out with,—

"Try and do my duty, indeed! I should be much obliged to you, Molly, if you would take care not to behave in such a manner as to bring down upon me such impertinence as I have just been receiving from Miss Browning."

"But I don't know what made her talk as she did, mamma," said Molly.

"I'm sure I don't know, and I don't care either. But I know that I never was spoken to as if I was trying to do my duty before,—'trying' indeed! everybody always knew that I did it, without talking about it before my face in that rude manner. I've that deep feeling about duty that I think it ought only to be talked about in church, and in such sacred places as that; not to have a common caller startling one with it, even though she was an early friend of your mother's. And as if I did not look after you quite as much as I look after Cynthia! Why, it was only yesterday I went up into Cynthia's room and found her reading a letter that she put away in a hurry as soon as I came in, and I did not even ask her who it was from, and I am sure I should have made you tell me."

Very likely. Mrs. Gibson shrank from any conflicts with Cynthia, pretty sure that she would be worsted in the end; while Molly generally submitted sooner than have any struggle for her own will.

Just then Cynthia came in.

"What's the matter?" said she quickly, seeing that something was wrong.

"Why, Molly has been doing something which has set that impertinent Miss Browning off into lecturing me on trying to do my duty! If your poor father had but lived, Cynthia, I should never have been spoken to as I have been. 'A stepmother trying to do her duty indeed.' That was Miss Browning's expression."

Any allusion to her father took from Cynthia all desire of irony. She came forward, and again asked Molly what was the matter.

Molly, herself ruffled, made answer,—

"Miss Browning seemed to think I was likely to marry some one whose character was objectionable——"

"You, Molly?" said Cynthia.

"Yes—she once before spoke to me,—I suspect she has got some notion about Mr. Preston in her head——"

Cynthia sate down quite suddenly. Molly went on, "and she spoke as if mamma did not look enough after me,—I think she was rather provoking——"

"Not rather, but very—very impertinent," said Mrs. Gibson, a little soothed by Molly's recognition of her grievance.

"What could have put it into her head?" said Cynthia, very quietly, taking up her sewing as she spoke.

"I don't know," said her mother, replying to the question after her own fashion. "I'm sure I don't always approve of Mr. Preston; but even if it was him she was thinking about, he's far more agreeable than she is; and I had much rather have him coming to call than an old maid like her any day."

"I don't know that it was Mr. Preston she was thinking about," said Molly. "It was only a guess. When you were both in London she spoke about him,—I thought she had heard something about you and him, Cynthia." Unseen by her mother Cynthia looked up at Molly, her eyes full of prohibition, her cheeks full of angry colour. Molly stopped short suddenly. After that look she was surprised at the quietness with which Cynthia said, almost immediately,—

"Well, after all it is only your fancy that she was alluding to Mr. Preston, so perhaps we had better not say any more about him; and as for her advice to mamma to look after you better, Miss Molly, I'll stand bail for your good behaviour; for both mamma and I know you're the last person to do any foolish things in that way. And now don't let us talk any more about it. I was coming to tell you that Hannah Brand's little boy has been badly burnt, and his sister is downstairs asking for old linen."

Mrs. Gibson was always kind to poor people, and she immediately got up and went to her stores to search for the article wanted.

Cynthia turned quietly round to Molly.

"Molly, pray don't ever allude to anything between me and Mr. Preston,—not to mamma, nor to any one. Never do! I've a reason for it,—don't say anything more about it, ever."

Mrs. Gibson came back at this moment, and Molly had to stop short again on the brink of Cynthia's confidence; uncertain indeed this time, if she would have been told anything more, and only sure that she had annoyed Cynthia a good deal.

But the time was approaching when she would know all.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE STORM BURSTS.

THE autumn drifted away through all its seasons; the golden corn-harvest, the walks through the stubble fields, and rambles into hazel-copses in search of nuts; the stripping of the apple-orchards of their ruddy fruit, amid the joyous cries and shouts of watching children; and the gorgeous tulip-like colouring of the later time had now come on with the shortening days. There was comparative silence in the land, excepting for the distant shots, and the whirr of the partridges as they rose up from the field.

Ever since Miss Browning's unlucky conversation things had been ajar in the Gibsons' house. Cynthia seemed to keep every one out at (mental) arms'-length; and particularly avoided any private talks with Molly. Mrs. Gibson, still cherishing a grudge against Miss Browning for her implied accusation of not looking enough after Molly, chose to exercise a most wearying supervision over the poor girl. It was, "Where have you been, child?" "Who did you see?" "Who was that letter from?" "Why were you so long out when you had only to go to so-and-so?" just as if Molly had really been detected in carrying on some underhand intercourse. She answered every question asked of her with the simple truthfulness of perfect innocence; but the inquiries (although she read their motive, and knew that they arose from no especial suspicion of her conduct, but only that Mrs. Gibson might be able to say that she looked well after her stepdaughter), chafed her inexpressibly. Very often she did not go out at all, sooner than have to give a plan of her intended proceedings, when perhaps she had no plan at all, only thought of wandering out at her own sweet will, and of taking pleasure in the bright solemn fading of the year. It was a very heavy time for Molly,—zest and life had fled, and left so many of the old delights mere shells of seeming. She thought it was that her youth had fled; at nineteen! Cynthia was no longer the same, somehow; and perhaps Cynthia's change would injure her in the distant Roger's opinion. Her stepmother seemed almost kind in comparison with Cynthia's withdrawal of her heart; Mrs. Gibson worried her to be sure, with all these forms of watching over her; but in all her other ways, she, at any rate, was the same. Yet Cynthia herself, seemed anxious and care-worn, though she would not speak of her anxieties to Molly. And then the poor girl in her goodness would blame herself for feeling Cynthia's change of manner; for as Molly said to herself, "If it is hard work for me to help always fretting after Roger, and wondering where he is, and how he is; what must it be for her?"

One day Mr. Gibson came in, bright and swift.

"Molly," said he, "where's Cynthia?"

"Gone out to do some errands——"

"Well, it's a pity—but never mind. Put on your bonnet and cloak

as fast as you can. I've had to borrow old Simpson's dog-cart,—there would have been room both for you and Cynthia; but as it is, you must walk back alone. I'll drive you as far on the Barford Road as I can, and then you must jump down. I can't take you on to Broadhurst's, I may be kept there for hours."

Mrs. Gibson was out of the room; out of the house it might be, for all Molly cared, now she had her father's leave and command. Her bonnet and cloak were on in two minutes, and she was setting by her father's side, the back seat shut up, and the light weight going swiftly and merrily bumping over the stone-paved lanes.

"Oh, this is charming," said Molly, after a toss-up on her seat from a tremendous bump.

"For youth, but not for crabbed age," said Mr. Gibson. "My bones are getting rheumatic, and would rather go smoothly over macadamized streets."

"That's treason to this lovely view and this fine pure air, papa. Only I don't believe you."

"Thank you. As you are so complimentary, I think I shall put you down at the foot of this hill; we have passed the second milestone from Hollingford."

"Oh, let me just go up to the top! I know we can see the blue range of the Malverns from it, and Dorrimor Hall among the woods; the horse will want a minute's rest, and then I will get down without a word."

She went up to the top of the hill; and there they sat still a minute or two, enjoying the view, without much speaking. The woods were golden, the old house of purple-red brick, with its twisted chimneys, rose up from among them facing on to green lawns, and a placid lake; beyond again were the Malvern Hills!

"Now jump down, lassie, and make the best of your way home before it gets dark. You'll find the cut over Croston Heath shorter than the road we've come by."

To get to Croston Heath, Molly had to go down a narrow lane over-shadowed by trees, with picturesque old cottages dotted here and there on the steep sandy banks; and then there came a small wood, and then there was a brook to be crossed on a plank-bridge, and up the steeper fields on the opposite side were cut steps in the turfy path, which ended, she was on Croston Heath, a wide-stretching common skirted by labourers' dwellings, past which a near road to Hollingford lay.

The loneliest part of the road was the first—the lane, the wood, the little bridge, and the clambering through the upland fields. But Molly cared little for loneliness. She went along the lane under the over-arching elm-branches, from which, here and there, a yellow leaf came floating down upon her very dress; past the last cottage where a little child had tumbled down the sloping bank, and was publishing the accident with frightened cries. Molly stooped to pick it up, and taking it in her

arms in a manner which caused intense surprise to take the place of alarm in its little breast, she carried it up the rough flag steps towards the cottage which she supposed to be its home. The mother came running in from the garden behind the house, still holding the late damsons she had been gathering in her apron; but, on seeing her, the little creature held out its arms to go to her, and she dropped her damsons all about as she took it, and began to soothe it as it cried afresh, interspersing her lulling with thanks to Molly. She called her by her name; and on Molly asking the woman how she came to know it, she replied that she had been a servant of Mrs. Goodenough before her marriage, and so was "bound to know Dr. Gibson's daughter by sight." After the exchange of two or three more words, Molly ran down into the lane, and pursued her way, stopping here and there to gather a nosegay of such leaves as struck her for their brilliant colouring. She entered the wood. As she turned a corner in the lonely path, she heard a passionate voice of distress; and in an instant she recognized Cynthia's tones. She stood still and looked around. There were some holly bushes shining out dark green in the midst of the amber and scarlet foliage. If any one was there, it must be behind these thick bushes. So Molly left the path, and went straight, plunging through the brown tangled growth of ferns and underwood, and turned the holly bushes. There stood Mr. Preston and Cynthia; he holding her hands tight, each looking as if just silenced in some vehement talk by the rustle of Molly's footsteps.

For an instant no one spoke. Then Cynthia said,—

"Oh, Molly, Molly, come and judge between us!"

Mr. Preston let go Cynthia's hands slowly, with a look that was more of a sneer than a smile; and yet he, too, had been strongly agitated, whatever was the subject in dispute. Molly came forward and took Cynthia's arm, her eyes steadily fixed on Mr. Preston's face. It was fine to see the fearlessness of her perfect innocence. He could not bear her look, and said to Cynthia,—

"The subject of our conversation does not well admit of a third person's presence. As Miss Gibson seems to wish for your company now, I must beg you to fix some other time and place where we can finish our discussion."

"I will go if Cynthia wishes me," said Molly.

"No, no; stay—I want you to stay—I want you to hear it all—I wish I had told you sooner."

"You mean that you regret that she has not been made aware of our engagement—that you promised long ago to be my wife. Pray remember that it was you who made me promise secrecy, not I you?"

"I don't believe him, Cynthia. Don't, don't cry if you can help it; I don't believe him."

"Cynthia," said he, suddenly changing his tone to fervid tenderness, "pray, pray do not go on so; you can't think how it distresses me." He stepped forwards to try and take her hand and soothe her; but

she shrank away from him, and sobbed the more irrepressibly. She felt Molly's presence so much to be a protection that now she dared to let herself go, and to weaken herself by giving way to her emotion.

"Go away!" said Molly. "Don't you see you make her worse?" But he did not stir; he was looking at Cynthia so intently that he did not seem even to hear her. "Go," said Molly, vehemently, "if it really distresses you to see her cry. Don't you see, it's you who are the cause of it?"

"I will go if Cynthia tells me," said he at length.

"Oh, Molly, I do not know what to do," said Cynthia, taking down her hands from her tear-stained face, and appealing to Molly, and sobbing worse than ever; in fact, she became hysterical, and though she tried to speak coherently, no intelligible words would come.

"Run to that cottage in the trees, and fetch her a cup of water," said Molly. He hesitated a little.

"Why don't you go?" said Molly, impatiently.

"I have not done speaking to her; you will not leave before I come back?"

"No. Don't you see she can't move in this state?"

He went quickly, if reluctantly.

Cynthia was some time before she could check her sobs enough to speak. At length, she said,—

"Molly, I do hate him!"

"But what did he mean by saying you were engaged to him? Don't cry, dear, but tell me; if I can help you I will, but I can't imagine what it all really is."

"It is too long a story to tell now, and I'm not strong enough. Look! he is coming back. As soon as I can, let us get home."

"With all my heart," said Molly.

He brought the water, and Cynthia drank, and was restored to calmness.

"Now," said Molly, "we had better go home as fast as you can manage it; it is getting dark quickly."

If she hoped to carry Cynthia off so easily, she was mistaken. Mr. Preston was resolute on this point. He said—

"I think since Miss Gibson has made herself acquainted with this much, we had better let her know the whole truth—that you are engaged to marry me as soon as you are twenty; otherwise you being here with me, and by appointment too, may appear strange, even equivocal to her."

"As I know that Cynthia is engaged to another man, you can hardly expect me to believe what you say, Mr. Preston."

"Oh, Molly," said Cynthia, trembling all over, but trying to be calm, "I am not engaged, neither to the person you mean, nor to Mr. Preston."

Mr. Preston forced a smile. "I think I have some letters that would convince Miss Gibson of the truth of what I have said; and which will convince Mr. Osborne Hamley, if necessary—I conclude it is to him she is alluding."

"I am quite puzzled by you both," said Molly. "The only thing I do know is, that we ought not to be standing here at this time of evening, and that Cynthia and I shall go home directly. If you want to talk to Miss Kirkpatrick, Mr. Preston, why don't you come to my father's house, and ask to see her openly, and like a gentleman."

"I am perfectly willing," said he; "I shall only be too glad to explain to Mr. Gibson on what terms I stand in relation to her. If I have not done it sooner, it is because I have yielded to her wishes."

"Pray, pray don't, Molly—you don't know all—you don't know anything about it; you mean well and kindly, I know, but you are only making mischief. I am quite well enough to walk, do let us go; I will tell you all about it when we are at home." She took Molly's arm and tried to hasten her away; but Mr. Preston followed, talking as he walked by their side.

"I do not know what you will say at home; but can you deny that you are my promised wife? Can you deny that it has only been at your earnest request that I have kept the engagement secret so long?" He was unwise—Cynthia stopped, and turned at bay.

"Since you will have it out, since I must speak here, I own that what you say is literally true; that when I was a neglected girl of sixteen, you—whom I believed to be a friend, lent me money at my need, and made me give you a promise of marriage."

"Made you!" said he, laying an emphasis on the first word.

Cynthia turned scarlet. "Made is not the right word, I confess. I liked you then—you were almost my only friend—and, if it had been a question of immediate marriage, I dare say I should never have objected. But I know you better now; and you have persecuted me so of late, that I tell you once for all (as I have told you before, till I am sick of the very words), that nothing shall ever make me marry you. Nothing. I see there's no chance of escaping exposure and, I dare say, losing my character, and I know losing all the few friends I have."

"Never me," said Molly, touched by the wailing tone of despair that Cynthia was falling into.

"It is hard," said Mr. Preston. "You may believe all the bad things you like about me, Cynthia, but I don't think you can doubt my real, passionate disinterested love for you."

"I do doubt it," said Cynthia, breaking out with fresh energy. "Ah! when I think of the self-denying affection I have seen—I have known—affection that thought of others before itself—"

Mr. Preston broke in at the pause she made. She was afraid of revealing too much to him.

"You do not call it love which has been willing to wait for years—to be silent while silence was desired—to suffer jealousy and to bear neglect, relying on the solemn promise of a girl of sixteen—for solemn say flimsy, when that girl grows older. Cynthia, I have loved you, and I do love

you, and I can't give you up. If you will but keep your word, and marry me, I'll swear I'll make you love me in return."

"Oh, I wish—I wish I'd never borrowed that unlucky money, it was the beginning of it all. Oh, Molly, I have saved and scrimped to repay it, and he won't take it now; I thought if I could but repay it, it would set me free."

"You seem to imply you sold yourself for twenty pounds," he said. They were nearly on the common now, close to the protection of the cottages, in very hearing of their inmates; if neither of the other two thought of this Molly did, and resolved in her mind to call in at one of them, and ask for the labourer's protection home; at any rate his presence must put a stop to this miserable altercation.

"I did not sell myself; I liked you then. But oh, how I do hate you now!" cried Cynthia, unable to contain her words.

He bowed and turned back, vanishing rapidly down the field staircase. At any rate that was a relief. Yet the two girls hastened on, as if he was still pursuing them. Once, when Molly said something to Cynthia, the latter replied—

"Molly, if you pity me—if you love me—don't say anything more just now. We shall have to look as if nothing had happened when we get home. Come to my room when we go upstairs to bed, and I will tell you all. I know you will blame me terribly, but I will tell you all."

So Molly did not say another word till they reached home; and then, comparatively at ease, inasmuch as no one perceived how late was their return to the house, each of the girls went up into their separate rooms, to rest and calm themselves before dressing for the necessary family gathering at dinner. Molly felt as if she were so miserably shaken that she could not have gone down at all, if her own interests only were at stake. She sat by her dressing-table, holding her head in her hands, her candles unlighted, and the room in soft darkness, trying to still her beating heart, and to recall all she had heard, and what would be its bearing on the lives of those whom she loved. Roger. Oh, Roger!—far away in mysterious darkness of distance—loving as he did (ah, that was love! That was the love to which Cynthia had referred, as worthy of the name!) and the object of his love claimed by another—false to one she must be! How could it be? What would he think and feel if ever he came to know it? It was of no use trying to imagine his pain—that could do no good. What lay before Molly was, to try and extricate Cynthia, if she could help her by thought, or advice, or action; not to weaken herself by letting her fancy run into pictures of possible, probable suffering.

When she went into the drawing-room before dinner, she found Cynthia and her mother tête-à-tête. There were candles in the room, but they were not lighted, for the wood-fire blazed merrily and fitfully, and they were awaiting Mr. Gibson's return, which might be expected at any minute. Cynthia sat in the shade, so it was only by her sensitive ear that Molly could judge of her state of composure. Mrs. Gibson was

telling some of her day's adventures—whom she had found at home in the calls she had been making; who had been out; and the small pieces of news she had heard. To Molly's quick sympathy Cynthia's voice sounded languid and weary, but she made all the proper replies, and expressed the proper interest at the right places, and Molly came to the rescue, chiming in, with an effort, it is true; but Mrs. Gibson was not one to notice slight shades or differences in manner. When Mr. Gibson returned, the relative positions of the parties were altered. It was Cynthia now who raised herself into liveliness, partly from a consciousness that he would have noticed any depression, and partly because, from her cradle to her grave, Cynthia was one of those natural coquettes, who instinctively bring out all their prettiest airs and graces in order to stand well with any man, young or old, who may happen to be present. She listened to his remarks and stories with all the sweet intentness of happier days, till Molly, silent and wondering, could hardly believe that the Cynthia before her was the same girl as she who was sobbing and crying as if her heart would break but two hours before. It is true she looked pale and heavy-eyed, but that was the only sign she gave of her past trouble, which yet must be a present care, thought Molly. After dinner, Mr. Gibson went out to his town patients; Mrs. Gibson subsided into her arm-chair, holding a sheet of *The Times* before her, behind which she took a quiet and lady-like doze. Cynthia had a book in one hand, with the other she shaded her eyes from the light. Molly alone could neither read, nor sleep, nor work. She sat in the seat in the bow-window; the blind was not drawn down, for there was no danger of their being overlooked. She gazed into the soft outer darkness, and found herself striving to discern the outlines of objects—the cottage at the end of the garden—the great beech-tree with the seat round it—the wire arches, up which the summer roses had clambered; each came out faint and dim against the dusky velvet of the atmosphere. Presently tea came, and there was the usual nightly bustle. The table was cleared, Mrs. Gibson roused herself, and made the same remark about dear papa that she had done at the same hour for weeks past. Cynthia too did not look different to usual. And yet what a hidden mystery did her calmness hide, thought Molly. At length came bed-time, and the accustomed little speeches. Both Molly and Cynthia went to their own rooms without exchanging a word. When Molly was in hers she had forgotten if she was to go to Cynthia, or Cynthia to come to her. She took off her gown and put on her dressing-gown, and stood and waited, and even sat down for a minute or two; but Cynthia did not come, so Molly went and knocked at the opposite door, which, to her surprise, she found shut. When she entered the room Cynthia sat by her dressing-table, just as she came up from the drawing-room. She had been leaning her head on her arms, and seemed almost to have forgotten the tryst she had made with Molly, for she looked up as if startled, and her face did seem full of worry and distress; in her solitude she made no more exertion, but gave way to thoughts of care.

CHAPTER XLIII.

CYNTHIA'S CONFESSION.

"You said I might come," said Molly, "and that you would tell me all."

"You know all, I think," said Cynthia heavily. "Perhaps you don't know what excuses I have, but at any rate you know what a scrape I am in."

"I've been thinking a great deal," said Molly timidly and doubtfully. "And I can't help fancying if you told papa——"

Before she could go on, Cynthia had stood up.

"No!" said she. "That I won't. Unless I'm to leave here at once. And you know I have not another place to go to—without warning I mean. I dare say my uncle would take me in, he's a relation, and would be bound to stand by me in whatever disgrace I might be; or perhaps I might get a governess's situation; a pretty governess I should be!"

"Pray, please, Cynthia, don't go off into such wild talking. I don't believe you've done so very wrong. You say you have not, and I believe you. That horrid man has managed to get you involved in some way; but I'm sure papa could set it to rights, if you would only make a friend of him and tell him all——"

"No, Molly," said Cynthia, "I can't, and there's an end of it. You may if you like, only let me leave the house first; give me that much time."

"You know I would never tell anything you wished me not to tell, Cynthia," said Molly, deeply hurt.

"Would you not, darling?" said Cynthia, taking her hand. "Will you promise me that? quite a sacred promise?—for it would be such a comfort to me to tell you all, now you know so much."

"Yes! I'll promise not to tell. You should not have doubted me," said Molly, still a little sorrowfully.

"Very well. I trust to you. I know I may."

"But do think of telling papa, and getting him to help you," persevered Molly.

"Never," said Cynthia resolutely, but more quietly than before. "Do you think I forget what he said at the time of that wretched Mr. Cox; how severe he was, and how long I was in disgrace, if indeed I'm out of it now? I am one of those people, as mamma says sometimes—I cannot live with persons who don't think well of me. It may be a weakness, or a sin, I am sure I don't know and I don't care; but I really cannot be happy in the same house with any one who knows my faults, and thinks that they are greater than my merits. Now you know your father would do that. I have often told you that he (and you too, Molly,) had a higher standard than I had ever known. Oh, I could not bear it—if he were to know he would be so angry with me—he would never get over it, and I have so liked him! I do so like him."

"Well, never mind, dear; he shall not know," said Molly, for Cynthia was again becoming hysterical,—“at least we'll say no more about it now.”

“And you'll never say any more—never—promise me,” said Cynthia, taking her hand eagerly.

“Never till you give me leave. Now do let me see if I cannot help you. Lie down on the bed, and I will sit by you, and let us talk it over.”

But Cynthia sate down again in the chair by the dressing-table.

“When did it all begin?” said Molly, after a long pause of silence.

“Long ago—four or five years. I was such a child to be left all to myself. It was the holidays, and mamma was away visiting, and the Donaldsons asked me to go with them to the Worcester Festival. You can't fancy how pleasant it all sounded, especially to me. I had been shut up in that great dreary house at Ashcombe, where mamma had her school; it belonged to Lord Cumnor, and Mr. Preston as his agent had to see it all painted and papered; but besides that he was very intimate with us: I believe mamma thought—no, I'm not sure about that, and I have enough blame to lay at her door, to prevent my telling you anything that may be only fancy——”

Then she paused, and sate still for a minute or two, recalling the past. Molly was struck by the aged and careworn expression which had taken temporary hold of the brilliant and beautiful face; she could see from that how much Cynthia must have suffered from this hidden trouble of hers.

“Well! at any rate we were intimate with him, and he came a great deal about the house, and knew as much as any one of mamma's affairs, and all the ins and outs of her life. I'm telling you that in order that you may understand how natural it was for me to answer his questions when he came one day and found me, not crying, for you know I'm not much given to that, in spite of to-day's exposure of myself; but fretting and fuming because, though mamma had written word I might go with the Donaldsons, she had never said how I was to get any money for the journey, much less for anything of dress, and I had outgrown all my last year's frocks, and as for gloves and boots—in short, I really had hardly clothes decent enough for church——”

“Why did not you write to her and tell her all this?” said Molly, half afraid of appearing to cast blame by her very natural question.

“I wish I had her letter to show you; you must have seen some of mamma's letters, though; don't you know how she always seems to leave out just the important point of every fact? In this case she descanted largely on the enjoyment she was having, and the kindness she was receiving, and her wish that I could have been with her, and her gladness that I too was going to have some pleasure, but the only thing that would have been of real use to me she left out, and that was where she was going to next. She mentioned that she was leaving the house she was stopping at the day after she wrote, and that she should be at home by a certain date; but I got the letter on a Saturday, and the festival began on the next Tuesday——”

"Poor Cynthia!" said Molly. "Still, if you had written, your letter might have been forwarded. I don't mean to be hard, only I do so dislike the thought of your ever having made a friend of that man."

"Ah!" said Cynthia, sighing. "How easy it is to judge rightly after one sees what evil comes from judging wrongly: I was only a young girl, hardly more than a child, and he was a friend to us then; excepting mamma, the only friend I knew; the Donaldsons were only kind and good-natured acquaintances."

"I am sorry," said Molly humbly, "I have been so happy with papa. I hardly can understand how different it must have been with you."

"Different! I should think so. The worry about money made me sick of my life. We might not say we were poor, it would have injured the school, but I would have stunted and starved if mamma and I had got on as happily together as we might have done—as you and Mr. Gibson do. It was not the poverty; it was that she never seemed to care to have me with her. As soon as the holidays came round, she was off to some great house or another, and I dare say I was at a very awkward age to have me lounging about in the drawing-room when callers came. Girls at the age I was then are so terribly keen at scenting out motives, and putting in their awkward questions as to the little twistings and twirlings and vanishings of conversation; they've no distinct notion of what are the truths and falsehoods of polite life. At any rate I was very much in mamma's way, and I felt it. Mr. Preston seemed to feel it too for me; and I was very grateful to him for kind words and sympathetic looks—crumbs of kindness which would have dropped under your table unnoticed. So this day, when he came to see how the workmen were getting on, he found me in the deserted schoolroom, looking at my faded summer bonnet and some old ribbons I had been sponging out, and half-worn-out gloves—a sort of rag-fair spread out on the deal table. I was in a regular passion with only looking at that shabbiness. He said he was so glad to hear I was going to this festival with the Donaldsons; old Betty, our servant, had told him the news, I believe. But I was so perplexed about money, and my vanity was so put out about my shabby dress, that I was in a pet, and said I should not go. He sat down on the table, and little by little he made me tell him all my troubles. I do sometimes think he was very nice in those days. Somehow I never felt as if it was wrong or foolish or anything to accept his offer of money at the time. He had twenty pounds in his pocket, he said, and really did not know what to do with it, should not want it for months; I could repay it, or rather mamma could, when it suited her. She must have known I should want money, and most likely thought I should apply to him. Twenty pounds would not be too much, I must take it all, and so on. I knew, at least I thought I knew, that I should never spend twenty pounds; but I thought I could give him back what I did not want, and so—well, that was the beginning! It does not sound so very wrong, does it, Molly?"

"No," said Molly, hesitatingly. She did not wish to make herself

into a hard judge, and yet she did so dislike Mr. Preston. Cynthia went on,—

“Well, what with boots and gloves, and a bonnet and a mantle, and a white muslin gown, which was made for me before I left on the Tuesday, and a silk gown that followed to the Donaldsons’, and my journey, and all, there was very little left of the twenty pounds, especially when I found I must get a ball-dress in Worcester, for we were all to go to the Ball. Mrs. Donaldson gave me my ticket, but she rather looked grave at my idea of going to the Ball in my white muslin, which I had already worn two evenings at their house. Oh dear! how pleasant it must be to be rich! You know,” continued Cynthia, smiling a very little, “I can’t help being aware that I am pretty, and that people admire me very much. I found it out first at the Donaldsons’. I began to think I did look pretty in my fine new clothes, and I saw that other people thought so too. I was certainly the belle of the house, and it was very pleasant to feel my power. The last day or two of that gay week Mr. Preston joined our party. The last time he had seen me was when I was dressed in shabby clothes too small for me, half-crying in my solitude, neglected and penniless. At the Donaldsons’ I was a little queen; and as I said, fine feathers make fine birds, all the people were making much of me; and at that ball, which was the first night he came, I had more partners than I knew what to do with. I suppose he really did fall in love with me then. I don’t think he had done so before. And then I began to feel how awkward it was to be in his debt. I could not give myself airs to him as I did to others. Oh! it was so awkward and uncomfortable! But I liked him, and felt him as a friend all the time. The last day I was walking in the garden along with the others, and I thought I could tell him how much I had enjoyed myself, and how happy I had been, all thanks to his twenty pounds (I was beginning to feel like Cinderella when the clock was striking twelve), and to tell him it should be repaid to him as soon as possible, though I turned sick at the thought of telling mamma, and knew enough of our affairs to understand how very difficult it would be to muster up the money. The end of our talk came very soon, for almost to my terror he began to talk violent love to me, and to beg me to promise to marry him. I was so frightened, that I ran away to the others. But that night I got a letter from him, apologizing for startling me, renewing his offer, his entreaties for a promise of marriage, to be fulfilled at any date I would please to name—in fact a most urgent love-letter, and in it a reference to my unlucky debt, which was to be a debt no longer, only an advance of the money to be hereafter mine if only—— You can fancy it all, Molly, better than I can remember it to tell it you.”

“And what did you say?” asked Molly, breathless.

“I did not answer it at all until another letter came, entreating for a reply. By that time mamma had come home, and the old daily pressure and plaint of poverty had come on. Mary Donaldson wrote to me often, singing the praises of Mr. Preston as enthusiastically as if she had been bribed to

do it. I had seen him a very popular man in their set, and I liked him well enough, and felt grateful to him. So I wrote and gave him my promise to marry him when I was twenty, but it was to be a secret till then. And I tried to forget I had ever borrowed money of him, but somehow as soon as I felt pledged to him I began to hate him. I could not endure his eagerness of greeting if ever he found me alone; and mamma began to suspect, I think. I cannot tell you all the ins and outs, in fact I did not understand them at the time, and I don't remember clearly how it all happened now. But I know that Lady Cuxhaven sent mamma some money to be applied to my education as she called it, and mamma seemed very much put out and in very low spirits, and she and I did not get on at all together. So of course I never ventured to name the hateful twenty pounds to her, but went on trying to think that if I was to marry Mr. Preston, it need never be paid—very mean and wicked I dare say, but oh, Molly, I've been punished for it, for now I abhor that man."

"But why? When did you begin to dislike him? You seem to have taken it very passively all this time."

"I don't know. It was growing upon me before I went to that school at Boulogne. He made me feel as if I was in his power; and by too often reminding me of my engagement to him, he made me critical of his words and ways. There was an insolence in his manner to mamma, too. Ah! you're thinking that I'm not too respectful a daughter—and perhaps not; but I could not bear his covert sneers at her faults, and I hated his way of showing what he called his 'love' for me. Then, after I had been a semestre at M^{me}. le Febvre's, a new English girl came—a cousin of his, who knew but little of me. Now, Molly, you must forget as soon as I have told you what I am going to say—and she used to talk so much and perpetually about her cousin Robert—he was the great man of the family, evidently—and how he was so handsome, and every lady of the land in love with him,—a lady of title into the bargain."

"Lady Harriet! I dare say," said Molly, indignantly.

"I don't know," said Cynthia, wearily. "I didn't care at the time, and I don't care now; for she went on to say there was a very pretty widow too, who made desperate love to him. He had often laughed with them at all her little advances, which she thought he did not see through. And, oh! and this was the man I had promised to marry, and gone into debt to, and written love-letters to. So now you understand it all, Molly."

"No, I don't yet. What did you do on hearing how he had spoken about your mother?"

"There was but one thing to do. I wrote and told him I hated him, and would never, never marry him, and would pay him back his money and the interest of it as soon as ever I could."

"Well?"

"And M^{me}. le Febvre brought me back my letter, unopened, I will say; and told me that she did not allow letters to gentlemen to be sent

by the pupils of her establishment unless she had previously seen their contents. I told her he was a family friend, the agent who managed mamma's affairs—I really could not stick at the truth; but she would not let it go; and I had to see her burn it, and to give her my promise I would not write again before she would consent not to tell mamma. So I had to calm down, and wait till I came home."

"But you did not see him then; at least, not for some time."

"No, but I could write; and I began to try and save up my money to pay him."

"What did he say to your letter?"

"Oh, at first he pretended not to believe I could be in earnest; he thought it was only pique, or a temporary offence to be apologized for and covered over with passionate protestations."

"And afterwards?"

"He condescended to threats; and, what is worse, then I turned coward. I could not bear to have it all known and talked about, and my silly letters shown—oh, such letters—I cannot bear to think of them, beginning, 'My dearest Robert,' to that man——"

"But, oh, Cynthia, how could you go and engage yourself to Roger?" asked Molly.

"Why not?" said Cynthia, sharply turning round upon her. "I was free—I am free; it seemed a way of assuring myself that I was quite free; and I did like Roger—it was such a comfort to be brought into contact with people who could be relied upon; and I was not a stock or a stone that I could fail to be touched with his tender, unselfish love, so different to Mr. Preston's. I know you don't think me good enough for him; and, of course, if all this comes out, he won't think me good enough either" (falling into a plaintive tone very touching to hear); "and sometimes I think I will give him up, and go off to some fresh life amongst strangers; and once or twice I have thought I would marry Mr. Preston out of pure revenge, and have him for ever in my power—only I think I should have the worst of it; for he is cruel in his very soul—tigerish, with his beautiful striped skin and relentless heart. I have so begged and begged him to let me go without exposure."

"Never mind the exposure," said Molly. "It will recoil far more on him than harm you."

Cynthia went a little paler. "But I said things in those letters about mamma. I was quick-eyed enough to all her faults, and hardly understood the force of her temptations; and he says he will show those letters to your father, unless I consent to acknowledge our engagement."

"He shall not!" said Molly, rising up in her indignation, and standing before Cynthia almost as resolutely fierce as if she were in the very presence of Mr. Preston himself. "I am not afraid of him. He dare not insult me, or if he does, I do not care. I will ask him for those letters, and see if he will dare to refuse me."

"You don't know him," said Cynthia, shaking her head. "He has

made many an appointment with me, just as if he would take back the money—which has been sealed up ready for him this four months; or as if he would give me back my letters. Poor, poor Roger! How little he thinks of all this. When I want to write words of love to him I pull myself up, for I have written words as affectionate to that other man. And if Mr. Preston ever guessed that Roger and I were engaged he would manage to be revenged on both him and me by giving us as much pain as he could with those unlucky letters—written when I was not sixteen, Molly,—only seven of them! They are like a mine under my feet, which may blow up any day; and down will come father and mother and all." She ended bitterly enough, though her words were so light.

"How can I get them?" said Molly, thinking: "for get them I will. With papa to back me, he dare not refuse."

"Ah! But that's just the thing. He knows I'm afraid of your father's hearing of it all, more than of any one else."

"And yet he thinks he loves you!"

"It is his way of loving. He says often enough he does not care what he does so that he gets me to be his wife; and that after that he is sure he can make me love him." Cynthia began to cry, out of weariness of body and despair of mind. Molly's arms were round her in a minute, and she pressed the beautiful head to her bosom, and laid her own cheek upon it, and hushed her up with lulling words, just as if Cynthia were a little child.

"Oh, it is such a comfort to have told you all!" murmured she. And Molly made reply,—“I am sure we have right on our side; and that makes me certain he must and shall give up the letters.”

"And take the money?" added Cynthia, lifting her head, and looking eagerly into Molly's face. "He must take the money. Oh, Molly, you can never manage it all without its coming out to your father! And I would far rather go out to Russia as a governess. I almost think I would rather—no, not that," said she, shuddering away from what she was going to say. "But he must not know—please, Molly, he must not know. I could not bear it. I don't know what I might not do. You'll promise me never to tell him, or mamma?"

"I never will. You do not think I would for anything short of saving——" She was going to have said, "saving you and Roger from pain." But Cynthia broke in,—

"For nothing. No reason whatever must make you tell your father. If you fail, you fail, and I will love you for ever for trying; but I shall be no worse than before. Better, indeed; for I shall have the comfort of your sympathy. But promise me not to tell Mr. Gibson."

"I have promised once," said Molly, "but I promise again; so now do go to bed, and try and rest. You are looking as white as a sheet; you'll be ill if you don't get some rest; and it's past two o'clock, and you're shivering with cold."

So they wished each other good-night. But when Molly got into her room all her spirit left her; and she threw herself down on her bed,

dressed as she was, for she had no heart left for anything. If Roger overheard of it all by any chance, she felt how it would disturb his love for Cynthia. And yet was it right to conceal it from him? She must try and persuade Cynthia to tell it all straight out to him as soon as he returned to England. A full confession on her part would wonderfully lessen any pain he might have on first hearing of it. She lost herself in thoughts of Roger—how he would feel, what he would say, how that meeting would come to pass, where he was at that very time, and so on, till she suddenly plucked herself up, and recollected what she herself had offered and promised to do. Now that the first furore was over, she saw the difficulties clearly; and the foremost of all was how she was to manage to have a tête-à-tête with Mr. Preston? How had Cynthia managed? and the letters that had passed between them too? Unwillingly, Molly was compelled to perceive that there must have been a great deal of underhand work going on beneath Cynthia's apparent openness of behaviour; and still more unwillingly she began to be afraid that she herself would be led into the practice. But she would try and walk in a straight path; and if she did wander out of it, it should only be to save pain to those whom she loved.

CHAPTER XLIV.

MOLLY GIBSON TO THE RESCUE.

It seemed curious enough, after the storms of the night, to meet in smooth tranquillity at breakfast. Cynthia was pale; but she talked as quietly as usual about all manner of indifferent things, while Molly sate silent, watching and wondering, and becoming convinced that Cynthia must have gone through a long experience of concealing her real thoughts and secret troubles before she could have been able to put on such a semblance of composure. Among the letters that came in that morning was one from the London Kirkpatricks; but not from Helen, Cynthia's own particular correspondent. Her sister wrote to apologize for Helen, who was not well, she said: had had the influenza, which had left her very weak and poorly.

"Let her come down here for change of air," said Mr. Gibson. "The country at this time of the year is better than London, excepting when the place is surrounded by trees. Now our house is well drained, high up, gravel soil, and I'll undertake to doctor her for nothing."

"It would be charming," said Mrs. Gibson, rapidly revolving in her mind the changes necessary in her household economy before receiving a young lady accustomed to such a household as Mr. Kirkpatrick's, and calculating the consequent inconveniences in her own mind, weighing them against the probable advantages even while she spoke.

"Should not you like it, Cynthia? and Molly too. You too, dear, would become acquainted with one of the girls, and I have no doubt you would be asked back again, which would be so very nice!"

"And I should not let her go," said Mr. Gibson, who had acquired an unfortunate facility of reading his wife's thoughts.

"Dear Helen!" went on Mrs. Gibson, "I should so like to nurse her, we would make your consulting-room into her own private sitting-room, my dear."—(It is hardly necessary to say that the scales had been weighed down by the inconveniences of having a person behind the scenes for several weeks). "For with an invalid so much depends on tranquillity. In the drawing-room, for instance, she might constantly be disturbed by callers; and the dining-room is so—so what shall I call it? so dinnery,—the smell of meat never seems to leave it; it would have been different if dear papa had allowed me to throw out that window——"

"Why can't she have the dressing-room for her bed-room, and the little room opening out of the drawing-room for her sitting-room?" asked Mr. Gibson.

"The library," for by this name Mrs. Gibson chose to dignify what had formerly been called the book-closet—"why, it would hardly hold a sofa, besides the books and the writing-table, and there are draughts everywhere. No, my dear, we had better not ask her at all, her own home is comfortable at any rate!"

"Well, well!" said Mr. Gibson, seeing that he was to be worsted, and not caring enough about the matter to show fight. "Perhaps you are right. It's a case of luxury *versus* fresh air. Some people suffer more from the want of one than from want of the other. You know I shall be glad to see her if she likes to come, and take us as we are, but I can't give up the consulting-room. It's a necessity and daily bread!"

"I'll write and tell them how kind Mr. Gibson is," said his wife in high contentment, as her husband left the room. "They'll be just as much obliged to him as if she had come!"

Whether it was Helen's illness, or from some other cause, after breakfast Cynthia became very flat and absent, and this lasted all day long; Molly understood now why her moods had been so changeable for many months, and was tender and forbearing with her accordingly. Towards evening when the two girls were left alone, Cynthia came and stood over Molly, so that her face could not be seen.

"Molly," said she, "will you do it? Will you do what you said last night? I have been thinking of it all day, and sometimes I believe he would give you back the letters if you asked him; he might fancy—at any rate it's worth trying, if you don't very much dislike it."

Now it so happened that with every thought she had given to it, Molly disliked the idea of the proposed interview with Mr. Preston more and more; but it was after all her own offer, and she neither could nor would draw back from it; it might do good; she did not see how it could possibly do harm. So she gave her consent, and tried to conceal her distaste, which grew upon her more and more as Cynthia hastily arranged the details.

"You shall meet him in the avenue leading from the park lodge up to

the Towers. He can come in one way, from the Towers, where he has often business—he has pass-keys everywhere—you can go in as we have often done by the lodge—you need not go far."

It did strike Molly that Cynthia must have had some experience in making all these arrangements; and she did venture to ask how he was to be informed of all this? Cynthia only reddened, and replied, "Oh! never mind! He will only be too glad to come; you heard him say he wished to discuss the affair more; it is the first time the appointment has come from my side. If I can but once be free—oh, Molly, I will love you, and be grateful to you all my life!"

Molly thought of Roger, and that thought prompted her next speech.

"It must be horrible—I think I'm very brave—but I don't think I could have—could have accepted even Roger, with a half-cancelled engagement hanging over me." She blushed as she spoke.

"You forget how I detest Mr. Preston!" said Cynthia. "It was that, more than any excess of love for Roger, that made me thankful to be at least as securely pledged to some one else. He did not want to call it an engagement, but I did; because it gave me the feeling of assurance that I was free from Mr. Preston. And so I am! all but these letters. Oh! if you can but make him take back his abominable money, and get me my letters. Then we would bury it all in oblivion, and he could marry somebody else, and I would marry Roger, and no one would be the wiser. After all it was only what people call 'youthful folly.' And you may tell Mr. Preston that as soon as he makes my letters public, shows them to your father or anything, I'll go away from Hollingford, and never come back——"

Loaded with many such messages, which she felt that she should never deliver, not really knowing what she should say, hating the errand, not satisfied with Cynthia's manner of speaking about her relations to Roger, oppressed with shame and complicity in conduct which appeared to her deceitful, yet willing to bear all and brave all, if she could once set Cynthia in a straight path—in a clear space, and almost more pitiful to her friend's great distress and possible disgrace, than able to give her that love which involves perfect sympathy, Molly set out on her walk towards the appointed place. It was a cloudy blustering day, and the noise of the blowing wind among the nearly leafless branches of the great trees filled her ears, as she passed through the park-gates and entered the avenue. She walked quickly, instinctively wishing to get her blood up, and have no time for thought. But there was a bend in the avenue about a quarter of a mile from the lodge; after that bend it was a straight line up to the great house, now emptied of its inhabitants. Molly did not like going quite out of sight of the lodge, and she stood facing it, close by the trunk of one of the trees. Presently she heard a step coming on the grass. It was Mr. Preston. He saw a woman's figure, half-behind the trunk of a tree, and made no doubt that it was Cynthia. But when he came nearer, almost close, the figure turned round, and, instead of the

brilliantly coloured face of Cynthia, he met the pale resolved look of Molly. She did not speak to greet him, but though he felt sure from the general aspect of pallor and timidity that she was afraid of him, her steady grey eyes met his with courageous innocence.

"Is Cynthia unable to come?" asked he, perceiving that she expected him.

"I did not know you thought that you should meet her," said Molly, a little surprised. In her simplicity she had believed that Cynthia had named that it was she, Molly Gibson, who would meet Mr. Preston at a given time and place; but Cynthia had been too worldly-wise for that, and had decoyed him thither by a vaguely worded note, which, while avoiding actual falsehood, had led him to believe that she herself would give him the meeting.

"She said she should be here," said Mr. Preston, extremely annoyed at being entrapped as he now felt that he had been, into an interview with Miss Gibson. Molly hesitated a little before she spoke. He was determined not to break the silence; as she had intruded herself into the affair, she should find her situation as awkward as possible.

"At any rate she sent me here to meet you," said Molly. "She has told me exactly how matters stand between you and her."

"Has she?" sneered he. "She is not always the most open or reliable person in the world!"

Molly reddened. She perceived the impertinence of the tone; and her temper was none of the coolest. But she mastered herself and gained courage by so doing.

"You should not speak so of the person you profess to wish to have for your wife. But putting all that aside, you have some letters of hers that she wishes to have back again."

"I dare say."

"And that you have no right to keep."

"No legal, or no moral right? which do you mean?"

"I do not know; simply you have no right at all, as a gentleman, to keep a girl's letters when she asks for them back again, much less to hold them over her as a threat."

"I see you do know all, Miss Gibson," said he, changing his manner to one of more respect. "At least she has told you her story from her point of view, her side; now you must hear mine. She promised me as solemnly as ever woman——"

"She was not a woman, she was only a girl, barely sixteen."

"Old enough to know what she was doing; but I'll call her a girl if you like. She promised me solemnly to be my wife, making the one stipulation of secrecy, and a certain period of waiting; she wrote me letters repeating this promise, and confidential enough to prove that she considered herself bound to me by such an implied relation. I don't give in to humbug—I don't set myself up as a saint—and in most ways I can look after my own interests pretty keenly; you know enough of her position as a

penniless girl, and at that time, with no influential connections to take the place of wealth, and help me on in the world, it was as sincere and unworldly a passion as ever man felt; she must say so herself. I might have married two or three girls with plenty of money; one of them was handsome enough, and not at all reluctant."

Molly interrupted him; she was chafed at the conceit of his manner. "I beg your pardon, but I do not want to hear accounts of young ladies whom you might have married; I come here simply on behalf of Cynthia, who does not like you, and who does not wish to marry you."

"Well, then I must make her 'like' me, as you call it. She did 'like' me once, and made promises which she will find it requires the consent of two people to break. I don't despair of making her love me as much as ever she did, according to her letters, at least, when we are married."

"She will never marry you," said Molly, firmly.

"Then if she ever honours any one else with her preference, he shall be allowed the perusal of her letters to me."

Molly almost could have laughed; she was so secure and certain that Roger would never read letters offered to him under these circumstances; but then she thought that he would feel such pain at the whole affair, and at the contact with Mr. Preston, especially if he had not heard of it from Cynthia first, and if she, Molly, could save him pain she would. Before she could settle what to say, Mr. Preston spoke again.

"You said the other day that Cynthia was engaged. May I ask whom to?"

"No," said Molly, "you may not. You heard her say it was not an engagement. It is not exactly; and if it were a full engagement, do you think, after what you last said, I should tell you to whom? But you may be sure of this, he would never read a line of your letters. He is too—— No! I won't speak of him before you. You could never understand him."

"It seems to me that this mysterious 'he' is a very fortunate person to have such a warm defender in Miss Gibson, to whom he is not at all engaged," said Mr. Preston, with so disagreeable a look on his face that Molly suddenly found herself on the point of bursting into tears. But she rallied herself, and worked on—for Cynthia first, and for Roger as well.

"No honourable man or woman will read your letters, and if any people do read them, they will be so much ashamed of it that they won't dare to speak of them. What use can they be of to you?"

"They contain Cynthia's reiterated promises of marriage," replied he.

"She says she would rather leave Hollingford for ever, and go out to earn her bread, than marry you."

His face fell a little. He looked so bitterly mortified that Molly was almost sorry for him.

"Does she say that to you in cold blood? Do you know you are telling me very hard truths, Miss Gibson?—if they are truths, that is to say," he continued, recovering himself a little. "Young ladies are very

fond of the words 'hate' and 'detest.' I have known many who have applied them to men whom they were all the time hoping to marry."

"I cannot tell about other people," said Molly, "I only know that Cynthia does—" Here she hesitated for a moment; she felt for his pain, and so she hesitated; but then she brought it out—"does as nearly hate you as anybody like her ever does hate."

"Like her?" said he, repeating the words almost unconsciously, raising on anything to try and hide his mortification.

"I mean, I should hate worse," said Molly in a low voice.

But he did not attend much to her answer. He was working the point of his stick into the turf, and his eyes were bent on it.

"So now would you mind sending her back the letters by me? I do assure you that you cannot make her marry you."

"You are very simple, Miss Gibson," said he, suddenly lifting up his head. "I suppose that you don't know that there is any other feeling that can be gratified, excepting love. Have you never heard of revenge? Cynthia has cajoled me with promises, and little as you or she may believe me—well, it's of no use speaking of that. I don't mean to let her go unpunished. You may tell her that. I shall keep the letters, and make use of them as I see fit when the occasion arises."

Molly was miserably angry with herself for her mismanagement of the affair. She had hoped to succeed: she had only made matters worse. What new argument could she use? Meanwhile he went on, lashing himself up as he thought how the two girls must have talked him over, bringing in wounded vanity to add to the rage of disappointed love.

"Mr. Osborne Hamley may hear of their contents, though he may be too honourable to read them. Nay, even your father may hear whispers; and if I remember them rightly, Miss Cynthia Kirkpatrick does not always speak in the most respectful terms of the lady who is now Mrs. Gibson. There are——"

"Stop," said Molly. "I won't hear anything out of these letters, written, when she was almost without friends, to you whom she looked upon as a friend! But I have thought of what I will do next. I give you fair warning. If I had not been foolish I should have told my father, but Cynthia made me promise that I would not. So I will tell it all, from beginning to end, to Lady Harriet, and ask her to speak to her father. I feel sure that she will do it; and I don't think you will dare to refuse Lord Cumnor."

He felt at once that he should not dare; that, clever land-agent as he was, and high up in the earl's favour on that account, yet that the conduct of which he had been guilty about the letters, and the threats which he had held out about them, were just what no gentleman, no honourable man, no manly man, could put up with in any one about him. He knew that much, and he wondered how she, the girl standing before him, had been clever enough to find it out. He forgot himself for an instant in admiration of her. There she stood, frightened, yet brave, not letting go her hold on what she meant to do, even when things seemed

most against her; and besides, there was something that struck him most of all perhaps, and which shows the kind of man he was—he perceived that Molly was as unconscious that he was a young man, and she a young woman, as if she had been a pure angel of heaven. Though he felt that he would have to yield, and give up the letters, he was not going to do it at once; and while he was thinking what to say so as still to evade making any concession till he had had time to think over it, he, with his quick senses all about him, heard the trotting of a horse cranching quickly along over the gravel of the drive. A moment afterwards, Molly's perception overtook him. He could see the startled look overspread her face; and in an instant she would have run away, but before the first rush was made, Mr. Preston laid his hand firmly on her arm.

"Keep quiet. You must be seen. You, at any rate, have done nothing to be ashamed of."

As he spoke Mr. Sheepshanks came round the bend of the road and was close upon them. Mr. Preston saw, if Molly did not, the sudden look of intelligence that dawned upon the shrewd ruddy face of the old gentleman—saw, but did not much heed. He went forwards and spoke to Mr. Sheepshanks, who made a halt right before them.

"Miss Gibson! your servant! Rather a blustering day for a young lady to be out, and cold, I should say, for standing still too long; eh, Preston?" poking his whip at the latter in a knowing manner.

"Yes," said Mr. Preston; "and I'm afraid I have kept Miss Gibson too long standing."

Molly did not know what to say or do; so she only bowed a silent farewell, and turned away to go home, feeling very heavy at heart at the non-success of her undertaking. For she did not know how she had conquered, in fact, although Mr. Preston might not as yet acknowledge it even to himself. Before she was out of hearing, she heard Mr. Sheepshanks say,—

"Sorry to have disturbed your tête-à-tête, Preston," but though she heard the words, their implied sense did not sink into her mind; she was only feeling how she had gone out glorious and confident, and was coming back to Cynthia defeated.

Cynthia was on the watch for her return, and, rushing downstairs, dragged Molly into the dining-room.

"Well, Molly? Oh! I see you have not got them. After all, I never expected it." She sat down, as if she could get over her disappointment better in that position, and Molly stood like a guilty person before her.

"I am so sorry; I did all I could; we were interrupted at last—Mr. Sheepshanks rode up."

"Provoking old man! Do you think you should have persuaded him to give up the letters if you had had more time?"

"I don't know. I wish Mr. Sheepshanks had not come just then. I did not like his finding me standing talking to Mr. Preston."

"Oh! I daresay he would never think anything about it. What did he—Mr. Preston—say?"

"He seemed to think you were fully engaged to him, and that these letters were the only proof he had. I think he loves you in his way."

"His way, indeed!" said Cynthia, scornfully.

"The more I think of it, the more I see it would be better for papa to speak to him. I did say I would tell it all to Lady Harriet, and get Lord Cumnor to make him give up the letters. But it would be very awkward."

"Very!" said Cynthia, gloomily. "But he would see it was only a threat."

"But I will do it in a moment, if you like. I meant what I said; only I feel that papa would manage it best of all, and more privately."

"I'll tell you what, Molly; you're bound by a promise, you know, and cannot tell Mr. Gibson without breaking your solemn word; but it's just this. I'll leave Hollingford and never come back again, if ever your father hears of this affair; there!" Cynthia stood up now, and began to fold up Molly's shawl, in her nervous excitement.

"Oh, Cynthia—Roger!" was all that Molly said.

"Yes, I know! you need not remind me of him. But I'm not going to live in the house with any one who may be always casting up in his mind the things he had heard against me—things—faults, perhaps—which sound so much worse than they really are. I was so happy when I first came here: you all liked me, and admired me, and thought well of me, and now—— Why, Molly, I can see the difference in you already. You carry your thoughts in your face—I have read them there these two days—you've been thinking, 'How Cynthia must have deceived me; keeping up a correspondence all this time—having half-engagements to two men.' You've been more full of that than of pity for me as a girl who has always been obliged to manage for herself, without any friend to help her and protect her."

Molly was silent. There was a great deal of truth in what Cynthia was saying; and yet a great deal of falsehood. For, through all this long forty-eight hours, Molly had loved Cynthia dearly; and had been more weighed down by the position the latter was in than Cynthia herself. She also knew—but this was a second thought following on the other—that she had suffered much pain in trying to do her best in this interview with Mr. Preston. She had been tried beyond her strength; and the great tears welled up into her eyes, and fell slowly down her cheeks.

"Oh! what a brute I am," said Cynthia, kissing them away. "I see—I know it is the truth, and I deserve it—but I need not reproach you."

"You did not reproach me!" said Molly, trying to smile. "I have thought some of what you said—but I do love you dearly—dearly, Cynthia—I should have done just the same as you did."

"No, you would not. Your grain is different, somehow."

CHAPTER XLV.

CONFIDENCES.

ALL the rest of that day Molly was depressed and not well. Having anything to conceal was so unusual—almost so unprecedented a circumstance with her that it preyed upon her in every way.

It was a nightmare that she could not shake off; she did so wish to forget it all, and yet every little occurrence seemed to remind her of it. The next morning's post brought several letters; one from Roger for Cynthia, and Molly, letterless herself, looked at Cynthia as she read it, with wistful sadness; it appeared to Molly as though Cynthia should have no satisfaction in these letters, until she had told him what was her exact position with Mr. Preston; yet Cynthia was colouring and dimpling up as she always did at any pretty words of praise, or admiration, or love. But Molly's thoughts and Cynthia's reading were both interrupted by a little triumphant sound from Mrs. Gibson, as she pushed a letter she had just received to her husband, with a—

"There! I must say I expected that!" Then, turning to Cynthia, she explained—"It is a letter from uncle Kirkpatrick, love. So kind, wishing you to go and stay with them, and help them to cheer up Helen; poor Helen! I am afraid she is very far from well. But we could not have had her here, without disturbing dear papa in his consulting-room; and, though I could have relinquished my dressing-room—he—well! so I said in my letter how you were grieved—you above all of us, because you are such a friend of Helen's, you know—and how you longed to be of use,—as I am sure you do—and so now they want you to go up directly, for Helen has quite set her heart upon it."

Cynthia's eyes sparkled. "I shall like going," said she—"all but leaving you, Molly," she added, in a lower tone, as if suddenly smitten with some compunction.

"Can you be ready to go up by the Bang-up to-night," said Mr. Gibson, "for, curiously enough, after more than twenty years of quiet practice at Hollingford, I am summoned up to-day for the first time to a consultation in London, to-morrow. I am afraid Lady Cumnor is worse, my dear."

"You don't say so? Poor dear lady! What a shock it is to me. I'm so glad I've had some breakfast. I could not have eaten anything."

"Nay, I only say she is worse. With her complaint, being worse may be only a preliminary to being better. Don't take my words for more than their literal meaning."

"Thank you. How kind and reassuring dear papa always is. About your gowns, Cynthia?"

"Oh, they are all right, mamma, thank you. I shall be quite ready by four o'clock. Molly, will you come with me and help me to pack? I wanted to speak to you, dear," said she, as soon as they had gone upstairs.

"It is such a relief to get away from a place haunted by that man; but I'm afraid you thought I was glad to leave you; and indeed I am not." There was a little flavour of "protesting too much" about this; but Molly did not perceive it. She only said, "Indeed I did not. I know from my own feelings how you must dislike meeting a man in public in a different manner from what you have done in private. I shall try not to see Mr. Preston again for a long, long time, I'm sure. But Cynthia, you have not told me one word out of Roger's letter. Please how is he? Has he quite got over his attack of fever?"

"Yes, quite. He writes in very good spirits. A great deal about birds and beasts, as usual, habits of natives, and things of that kind. You may read from there—indicating a place in the letter—to there, if you can; and I'll tell you what, I'll trust you with it, Molly, while I pack (and that shows my sense of your honour, not but what you might read it all, only you'd find the love-making dull); but make a little account of where he is, and what he is doing, date, and that sort of thing, and send it to his father."

Molly took the letter down without a word, and began to copy it at the writing-table; often reading over what she was allowed to read; often pausing, her cheek on her hand, her eyes on the letter, and letting her imagination rove to the writer, and all the scenes in which she had either seen him herself, or in which her fancy had painted him. She was startled from her meditations by Cynthia's sudden entrance into the drawing-room, looking the picture of glowing delight. "No one here! What a blessing! Ah, Miss Molly, you are more eloquent than you believe yourself. Look here!" holding up a large full envelope, and then quickly replacing it in her pocket, as if she was afraid of being seen. "What's the matter, sweet one?" coming up and caressing Molly. "Is it worrying itself over that letter? Why, don't you see these are my very own horrible letters, that I am going to burn directly, that Mr. Preston has had the grace to send me, thanks to you, little Molly—cuishla ma chree, pulse of my heart,—the letters that have been hanging over my head like somebody's sword for these two years?"

"Oh, I am so glad!" said Molly, rousing up a little. "I never thought he would have sent them. He is better than I believed him. And now it is all over. I am so glad. You quite think he means to give up all claim over you by this, don't you, Cynthia?"

"He may claim, but I won't be claimed; and he has no proofs now. It is the most charming relief; and I owe it all to you, you precious little lady! Now there is only one thing more to be done; and if you would but do it for me——?" (coaxing and caressing while she asked the question).

"Oh, Cynthia, don't ask me; I cannot do any more. You don't know how sick I go when I think of yesterday, and Mr. Sheepshanks' look."

"It is only a very little thing. I won't burden your conscience with telling you how I got my letters, but it is not through a person I can trust with money; and I must force him to take back his twenty-three pounds

odd shillings. I have put it together at the rate of five per cent., and it's sealed up. Oh, Molly, I should go off with such a light heart if you would only try to get it safely to him. It's the last thing; there would be no immediate hurry, you know. You might meet him by chance in a shop, in the street, even at a party—and if you only had it with you in your pocket, there would be nothing so easy."

Molly was silent. "Papa would give it to him. There would be no harm in that. I would tell him he must ask no questions as to what it was."

"Very well," said Cynthia, "have it your own way. I think my way is the best; for if any of this affair comes out—— But you've done a great deal for me already, and I won't blame you now for declining to do any more!"

"I do so dislike having these underhand dealings with him," pleaded Molly.

"Underhand! just simply giving him a letter from me! If I left a note for Miss Browning, should you dislike giving it to her?"

"You know that's very different. I could do it openly."

"And yet there might be writing in that; and there would not be a line with the money. It would only be the winding-up—the honourable, honest winding-up of an affair which has worried me for years! But do as you like!"

"Give it me!" said Molly. "I will try."

"There's a darling! You can but try; and if you can't give it to him in private, without getting yourself into a scrape, why, keep it till I come back again. He shall have it then, whether he will or no!"

Molly looked forward to her tête-à-tête two days with Mrs. Gibson with very different anticipations to those with which she had welcomed the similar intercourse with her father. In the first place, there was no accompanying the travellers to the inn from which the coach started; leave-taking in the market-place was quite out of the bounds of Mrs. Gibson's sense of propriety. Besides this, it was a gloomy, rainy evening, and candles had to be brought in at an unusually early hour. There would be no break for six hours—no music, no reading; but the two ladies would sit at their worsted work, pattering away at small-talk, with not even the usual break of dinner; for, to suit the requirements of those who were leaving, they had already dined early. But Mrs. Gibson really meant to make Molly happy, and tried to be an agreeable companion, only Molly was not well, and uneasy about many apprehended cares and troubles—and at such hours of indisposition as she was then passing through, apprehensions take the shape of certainties, lying await in our paths. Molly would have given a good deal to have shaken off all these feelings, unusual enough to her; but the very house and furniture, and rain-blurred outer landscape, seemed steeped with unpleasant associations, most of them dating from the last few days.

"You and I must go on the next journey, I think, my dear," said

Mrs. Gibson, almost chiming in with Molly's wish that she could get away from Hollingford into some new air and life, for a week or two. We have been stay-at-homes for a long time, and variety of scene is so desirable for the young! But I think the travellers will be wishing themselves at home by this nice bright fireside. 'There's no place like home,' as the poet says. 'Mid pleasures and palaces although I may roam,' it begins, and it's both very pretty and very true. It's a great blessing to have such a dear little home as this, is not it, Molly?"

"Yes," said Molly, rather drearily, having something of the "Toujours perdrix" feeling at the moment. If she could but have gone away with her father, just for two days, how pleasant it would have been.

"To be sure, love, it would be very nice for you and me to go a little journey all by ourselves. You and I. No one else. If it were not such miserable weather we would have gone off on a little impromptu tour. I've been longing for something of the kind for some weeks; but we live such a restricted kind of life here! I declare sometimes I get quite sick of the very sight of the chairs and tables that I know so well. And one misses the others too! It seems so flat and deserted without them!"

"Yes! We are very forlorn to-night; but I think it's partly owing to the weather!"

"Nonsense, dear. I can't have you giving in to the silly fancy of being affected by weather. Poor dear Mr. Kirkpatrick used to say, 'a cheerful heart makes its own sunshine.' He would say it to me, in his pretty way, whenever I was a little low—for I am a complete barometer—you may really judge of the state of the weather by my spirits, I have always been such a sensitive creature! It is well for Cynthia that she does not inherit it; I don't think her easily affected in any way, do you?"

Molly thought for a minute or two, and then replied—"No, she is certainly not easily affected—not deeply affected perhaps I should say."

"Many girls, for instance, would have been touched by the admiration she excited—I may say the attentions she received when she was at her uncle's last summer."

"At Mr. Kirkpatrick's?"

"Yes. There was Mr. Henderson, that young lawyer; that's to say he is studying law, but he has a good private fortune and is likely to have more, so he can only be what I call playing at law. Mr. Henderson was over head and ears in love with her. It is not my fancy, although I grant mothers are partial; both Mr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick noticed it; and in one of Mrs. Kirkpatrick's letters, she said that poor Mr. Henderson was going into Switzerland for the long vacation, doubtless to try and forget Cynthia; but she really believed he would find it only dragging at each remove a lengthening chain. I thought it such a refined quotation, and altogether worded so prettily. You must know aunt Kirkpatrick some day, Molly, my love: she is what I call a woman of a truly elegant mind."

"I can't help thinking it was a pity that Cynthia did not tell them of her engagement."

"It is not an engagement, my dear! How often must I tell you that?"

"But what am I to call it?"

"I don't see why you need to call it anything. Indeed I don't understand what you mean by 'it.' You should always try to express yourself intelligibly. It really is one of the first principles of the English language. In fact, philosophers might ask what is language given us for at all, if it is not that we may make our meaning understood?"

"But there is something between Cynthia and Roger; they are more to each other than I am to Osborne, for instance. What am I to call it?"

"You should not couple your name with that of any unmarried young man, it is so difficult to teach you delicacy, child. Perhaps one may say there is a peculiar relation between dear Cynthia and Roger, but it is very difficult to characterize it; I have no doubt that is the reason she shrinks from speaking about it. For, between ourselves, Molly, I really sometimes think it will come to nothing. He is so long away, and, privately speaking, Cynthia is not very very constant. I once knew her very much taken before—that little affair is quite gone by; and she was very civil to Mr. Henderson, in her way; I fancy she inherits it, for when I was a girl I was beset by lovers, and could never find in my heart to shake them off. You have not heard dear papa say anything of the old squire, or dear Osborne, have you? It seems so long since we have heard or seen anything of Osborne. But he must be quite well, I think, or we should have heard of it."

"I believe he is quite well. Some one said the other day that they had met him riding—it was Mrs. Goodenough, now I remember—and that he was looking stronger than he had done for years."

"Indeed! I am truly glad to hear it. I always was fond of Osborne; and, do you know, I never really took to Roger; I respected him and all that, of course. But to compare him with Mr. Henderson! Mr. Henderson is so handsome and well-bred, and gets all his gloves from Houbigant!"

It was true that they had not seen anything of Osborne Hamley for a long time; but, as it often happens, just after they had been speaking about him he appeared. It was on the day following on Mr. Gibson's departure that Mrs. Gibson had received one of the notes, not so common now as formerly, from the family in town asking her to go over to the Towers, and find a book, or a manuscript, or something or other that Lady Cumnor wanted with all an invalid's impatience. It was just the kind of employment she required for an amusement on a gloomy day, and it put her into a good humour immediately. There was a certain confidential importance about it, and it was a variety, and it gave her the pleasant drive in a fly up the noble avenue, and the sense of being the temporary mistress of all the grand rooms once so familiar to her. She asked Molly to accompany her, out of an access of kindness, but was not at all sorry when Molly excused herself and preferred stopping at home. At eleven o'clock Mrs. Gibson was off, all in her Sunday best (to use the servant's expression, which she herself

would so have contemned), well-dressed in order to impose on the servants at the Towers, for there was no one else to be seen or to be seen by.

"I shall not be at home until the afternoon, my dear! But I hope you will not find it dull. I don't think you will, for you are something like me, my love—never less alone than when alone, as one of the great authors has justly expressed it."

Molly enjoyed her house to herself to the full as much as Mrs. Gibson would enjoy having the Towers to herself. She ventured on having her lunch brought upon a tray into the drawing-room, so that she might eat her sandwiches while she went on with her book. In the middle, Mr. Osborne Hamley was announced. He came in, looking wretchedly ill in spite of purblind Mrs. Goodenough's report of his healthy appearance.

"This call is not on you, Molly," said he, after the first greetings were over. "I was in hopes I might have found your father at home; I thought lunch-time was the best hour." He had sat down, as if thoroughly glad of the rest, and fallen into a languid stooping position, as if it had become so natural to him that no sense of what were considered good manners sufficed to restrain him now.

"I hope you did not want to see him professionally?" said Molly, wondering if she was wise in alluding to his health, yet urged to it by her real anxiety.

"Yes, I did. I suppose I may help myself to a biscuit and a glass of wine? No, don't ring for more. I could not eat it if it was here. But I just want a mouthful; this is quite enough, thank you. When will your father be back?"

"He was summoned up to London. Lady Cumnor is worse. I fancy there is some operation going on; but I don't know. He will be back to-morrow night."

"Very well. Then I must wait. Perhaps I shall be better by that time. I think it's half fancy; but I should like your father to tell me so. He will laugh at me, I daresay; but I don't think I shall mind that. He always is severe on fanciful patients, is not he, Molly?"

Molly thought that if he saw Osborne's looks just now he would hardly think him fanciful, or be inclined to be severe. But she only said,—
"Papa enjoys a joke at everything, you know. It is a relief after all the sorrow he sees."

"Very true. There is a great deal of sorrow in the world. I don't think it's a very happy place after all. So Cynthia is gone to London," he added, after a pause. "I think I should like to have seen her again. Poor old Roger! He loves her very dearly, Molly," he said. Molly hardly knew how to answer him in all this; she was so struck by the change in both voice and manner.

"Mamma has gone to the Towers," she began, at length. "Lady Cumnor wanted several things that mamma only can find. She will be sorry to miss you. We were speaking of you only yesterday, and she said how long it was since we had seen you."

"I think I've grown careless; I have often felt so weary and ill that it was all I could do to keep up a brave face before my father."

"Why did you not come and see papa?" said Molly; "or write to him?"

"I cannot tell. I drifted on sometimes better, and sometimes worse, till to-day I mustered up pluck, and came to hear what your father has got to tell me: and all for no use it seems."

"I am very sorry. But it is only for two days. He shall go and see you as soon as ever he returns."

"He must not alarm my father, remember, Molly," said Osborne, lifting himself by the arms of his chair into an upright position and speaking eagerly for the moment. "I wish to God Roger was at home," said he, falling back into the old posture.

"I can't help understanding you," said Molly. "You think yourself very ill; but is not it that you are tired just now?" She was not sure if she ought to have understood what was passing in his mind; but as she did, she could not help speaking a true reply.

"Well, sometimes I do think I'm very ill; and then, again, I think it's only the moping life sets me fancying and exaggerating." He was silent for some time. Then, as if he had taken a sudden resolution, he spoke again. "You see there are others depending upon me—upon my health. You have not forgotten what you heard that day in the library at home? No, I know you have not. I have seen the thought of it in your eyes often since then. I did not know you at that time. I think I do now."

"Don't go on talking so fast," said Molly. "Rest. No one will interrupt us; I will go on with my sewing; when you want to say anything more I shall be listening." For she had been alarmed at the strange pallor that had come over his face.

"Thank you." After a time he roused himself, and began to speak very quietly, as if on an indifferent matter of fact.

"The name of my wife is Aimée. Aimée Hamley of course. She lives at Bishopsfield, a village near Winchester. Write it down, but keep it to yourself. She is a Frenchwoman, a Roman Catholic, and was a servant. She is a thoroughly good woman. I must not say how dear she is to me. I dare not. I meant once to have told Cynthia, but she did not seem quite to consider me as a brother. Perhaps she was shy of a new relation, but you'll give my love to her, all the same. It is a relief to think that some one else has my secret; and you are like one of us, Molly. I can trust you almost as I can trust Roger. I feel better already now I feel that some one else knows the whereabouts of my wife and child."

"Child!" said Molly, surprised. But before he could reply, Maria had announced,—

"Miss Phoebe Browning."

"Fold up that paper," said he, quickly, putting something into her hands. "It is only for yourself."

Induction and Deduction.

At the present moment, when all thinking minds are deeply imbued with the importance of scientific research, it may not prove uninteresting, if I attempt still further * to illustrate my views regarding the nature and methods of investigation in the natural sciences.

Philosophers in general admit that there are two methods of inquiry into the phenomena or laws of nature, viz., *induction* and *deduction*; both methods being in fact considered as but different roads to the same end, the only difference being in the starting point; inasmuch as the deductive method commences with general principles, the inductive with special facts. Whereas in the application of both it is said that induction always precedes deduction.

According to the views of Aristotle the nature of induction may best be explained by quoting the instance he himself gives of a conclusion arrived at by induction.

Men, horses, mules, &c., live long.

Men, horses, mules, &c., have little bile.

All animals, therefore, that have little bile live long.

To this kind of conclusion, if one wishes to call it by that name, natural philosophers are accustomed; but what is called conclusion here, is really only the perception of the coincidence of two phenomena. The absence of bile is a fact which accompanies longevity, it is a part of a whole, and the conclusion is by no means a syllogism containing in itself the reason why longevity should be dependent on the absence of bile. Let us substitute in the middle link for bile, another accompanying fact, which is common to certain animals, for instance:—

Horses, mules, &c., live long.

Horses, mules, &c.	{	have little bile. have glycogen in their flesh. have no uric acid. have hippuric acid.
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It is now at once evident, that the combination of these qualities with longevity is perfectly arbitrary, and not founded on ratiocination. In trying to explain a natural fact or process, the naturalist seeks to establish a connection between the points observed; and, noticing two facts constantly accompanying each other, he starts with the presumption, that the two stand in relation to each other like cause and effect, or that the one is dependent on the other. But this is merely a notion not founded on

* See Author's Essay on Lord Bacon.

fact ; an idea simply, which may, or may not, arise in the mind of the observer.

Aristotle defines induction as the way from the special to the general, as in natural philosophy first the knowledge of a fact, and afterwards its explanation, is to be found. But it is clear that in this sense he considered induction not as a method, but as a rule for guiding inquiry.

It is clear that, if all natural forces, their laws, and all things belonging to them, their nature, reaction, and properties were thoroughly known to us, the inquiry into any special process and its explanation would be a simple deductive problem ; each single case could then be solved by simple reasoning.

Suppose it were the rusting of iron in the air which had to be explained. Preliminary inquiries into the composition of rust have determined that it contains iron, oxygen, and water ; and besides that, the composition of the air is thoroughly known. So the elements for the explanation of the rusting of iron appear to be completely at hand ; the experiment, however, shows that in an atmosphere of oxygen, and in the presence of watery vapour, iron does not rust. It is therefore evident, that besides oxygen and vapour, another component part of the air must be present for the conversion of iron into rust. Now it is known that air contains small quantities of carbonic acid, and it can be demonstrated by experiment, that with free access of oxygen, a small trace of carbonic acid suffices to convert a large quantity of metallic iron into the oxide. But rust does not contain any carbonic acid, and so the question arises, what share the acid has in that process. Another known fact is now sufficient to complete the explanation ; viz., the properties of the carbonate of protoxide of iron. In a damp atmosphere, this carbonate absorbs oxygen, and the protoxide is converted into the higher oxide, which does not combine with carbonic acid. During the conversion of the metal into rust, at first the lower oxide is generated, binding carbonic acid ; but the latter is freed again when the protoxide becomes sesquioxide, and so the carbonic acid can resume its original action on the remaining metal for the second and hundredth time, until gradually the whole piece is thoroughly converted into rust. Further inquiries have shown that there is a particular case in which iron in a damp atmosphere may get rusty even in the absence of carbonic acid ; that is, when the air contains ammonia, but then the rusting ceases as soon as all the ammonia has been absorbed. Lastly, it is known that electricity co-operates in the formation of rust.

To this class of researches belong, amongst others, those about the formation of dew by Dr. Wells. That dew is a watery deposit, brought on by cooling, was beyond doubt ; nor was there any doubt that only two modes of cooling existed. The problem to be solved turned on the question, whether the cooling was caused by the transmission of heat through a conductor or by radiation ; and this could be decided by experiments founded on laws thoroughly known.

Researches of this kind meet with no outward obstacles, and merely a certain amount of knowledge and a just appreciation of the accompanying circumstances are needed in order to conduct them. These, however, are very rare, because, in regard to most problems the naturalist does not at once find the necessary material for logical reasoning at his disposal. At the same time it will be seen, that although by researches of this class our insight into the nature of certain phenomena may be increased and become more profound, nevertheless the real limits of science are thereby not widened.

In the great majority of other researches the philosopher meets with obstacles, which the whole sum of his scientific knowledge, as well as the most acute reasoning power, cannot overcome. These, then, are new acts or phenomena appertaining to unknown laws and not accessible to reason for want of the intermediate links for a conclusion.

For this class of researches even the naturalist must possess what principally characterizes the poet, viz., imagination.

The sum total of what we know about nature and her powers, is, in fact, compared with that which we do not know, so small, that naturalists of our age generally stand in exactly the same relation to the problem they attempt to solve as the philosophers of the sixteenth century did to the problems hidden from their understanding which they had to deal with and which by us are looked upon as truisms. As they did then, so we now generally lack one or two of the necessary links for deductive reasoning, and in the absence of one of them our understanding encounters a void it cannot fill up.

That, therefore, which gives us the advantage over former experimenters, does not consist in increased reasoning power, nor in a greater quickness and acuteness of our senses, but in an increased store of facts and experiences, that is, increased material for ratiocination.

This point of view scarcely admits of doubt, although few only have a clear conception of the source from which the continually increasing store of our reasoning material is derived.

A glance into the history of the so-called inductive sciences shows us at once that for centuries they possessed merely the character of art. This character astronomy and mechanics maintained till the time of Newton, part of physics till the time of Galileo, chemistry till the time of Bergmann. Boerhave still defined chemistry as "*ars docens exercere certas physicas operationes.*"

The difference between art and science principally consists in the difference of their objects: art aims at the discovery of facts, science at their explanation. Of course, speaking of art I do not mean any of the so-called fine arts. The artist seeks an object; the experimentalist seeks "a thing," from parts he attempts to construct a whole; the man of science, on the other hand, searches after the cause: starting from the whole, he follows up its parts till he arrives at the very roots.

As the artist knows nothing about a cause, and a cause is of no value

to him, it is clear that what goes on in his mind is not ratiocination. The main characteristic of his thinking is that within his range only lies what is perceptible through the senses ; much in the same way as the understanding tests the conceptions—measures them out, so to say, fixes them and makes them unalterable, in order to be able to use them for deductive reasoning—the inductive artist also acts. He gropes round the properties of things, using his senses to the utmost, and in concentrating by his will his perceptive faculties consecutively on the various qualities of an object and the peculiarities of a phenomenon, each time excluding all others, his imagination gradually acquires a clear and defined view of the whole thing, comparable to an abstract idea, comprising the totality of the thing or phenomenon. A blue, black, or yellow colour, or the formation of a white precipitate, which dissolves or does not dissolve in certain acids or alkalies, calls to the mind of the chemist the idea of iron, iodine, &c.; which idea, however, is totally different from that connected with these things in every-day life.

By combining correct conceptions with each other the understanding arrives at conclusions, the truth of which can again only be recognized by the understanding. The combinations of an artist's thoughts, on the contrary, are able to assume shape, or to become in some other way perceptible to the senses.

It is to this peculiar mental process, in which imagination acts the chief part, that I should like to apply the term induction ; and I believe that this is not in opposition to Aristotle.

It is not easy to give a clear conception of an experimentalist's reasoning operations. They depend, as was already mentioned, upon a combination of facts or phenomena, standing to each other in a similar relation as the logical conceptions, which lead the understanding in forming its conclusions. From facts or reactions, with which the experimenter is conversant, he divines the existence of new hitherto unknown ones. The conclusion he arrives at is again a *fact* or a *reaction*. The reasoning of the chemist or natural philosopher can perhaps be best compared to the peculiar faculty of the composer, who thinks in sounds.

In the exact sciences the logic of the explanation of a phenomenon, or of the demonstration of a theory, rests upon facts, connected together like the links of a chain, or like joints ; and whoever will take the trouble to read investigations in chemistry or physics, will at once perceive that the majority of facts the philosopher makes use of for explanation or demonstration do not spontaneously occur in nature, but that they have first been devised or invented by the naturalist. The missing facts, which make deductive reasoning impossible, he is obliged to seek by induction ; that is, through combinations of his imagination. His work now consists in letting those means or things which seem appropriate to his purpose act upon each other according to the rules of experimental art ; and from the reactions or phenomena thereby called forth, to draw conclusions as to the existence or non-existence of the fact in question. He makes, as we

express it, a series of experiments, which, by their result, determine the direction of his deductive reasoning.

The difficulty for him is, that the way leading to the discovery of the missing facts is totally unknown to him; for if the way were known, the latter could be found by reasoning. He is, therefore, obliged to confine himself to the watching of the phenomena furnished by his experiments, as these are the landmarks to lead him in the different operations of his imagination.

One of the simplest examples of the inductive process is furnished by Schoenbein's memorable discovery of ozonized oxygen, by means of chemistry.

Schoenbein had found that atmospheric air, when electrical sparks are passed through it, acquires new properties, the most noticeable of which consists in a most powerful affinity of its oxygen, to a degree hitherto unknown. In such air a number of bodies, such as silver, upon which oxygen, in non-electrized air, has no influence whatever, become oxidized.

Now the question is, how did Schoenbein arrive at the conclusion, that phosphorus slowly burning in the air, puts the air into the same state as the electrical spark? This conclusion was founded on the observation, that electrized air smells like phosphorus, and *vice versa*, slowly burning phosphorus like electrized air; furthermore, Schoenbein has discovered that the smelling matter possessed the oxidizing effects. So the conclusion of the formation and existence of the same thing—the ozon—in two according to their nature totally different processes, originated in the observation of the same impression upon one of the senses—that of smell. If the leadership in this combination of ideas had been left to the understanding, the discovery most probably would not have been made; for the understanding would not have been able to reconcile those two facts, the formation of an agent possessing most powerful oxidizing properties, through or by the side of a body as highly oxidizable as phosphorus.

One of Faraday's greatest discoveries furnishes another example of induction still more complicated.

Oerstedt had produced magnetism by passing an electrical current through metal bars. Faraday on the contrary tried to produce an electrical spark or current by means of a magnet; his endeavours were directed upon the production of a phenomenon which, as the law and the way leading to it were unknown, could only be solved by art, that is by means of the inductive method. Not until the phenomenon was once known in all its bearings, did it become possible to make it the object of deductive examination, and so the contrast between Faraday's inductive task and the deductive one of Weber becomes evident. To use a former expression, Faraday sought *the thing*, Weber the *cause* or *law*. I have heard some mathematicians complain that the style of Faraday's writings on such subjects was almost unintelligible to them, and that they were scarcely readable in consequence of their contents resembling mere extracts from a diary; but the fault lay with the mathematicians, not with Faraday.

Natural philosophers who starting from chemistry have gone over to the study of physics receive from Faraday's treatises an impression like that of a beautiful musical composition upon a trained ear.

The electrical machine, the electrophorus, the Leyden phial, the Voltaic pile, Kepler's three laws, have been found out through combinations of imagination; the same is the case with those most complicated chemical processes used for obtaining certain metals, for instance, iron, silver, and copper, from their respective ores. The conversion of iron into steel, of copper into brass, of skin into leather, of fat into soap, of salt into soda, and a thousand other important discoveries, have been made by men who either knew nothing at all about the real nature of the bodies or processes they had to deal with, or whose notions about it were at least totally wrong. The understanding had nothing at all to do with that association of ideas which led the inventor of glove-leather to the top of towers, there to collect for his purpose the white excrements of rooks and jackdaws, or which led the dyer to use cow-dung for fixing his dyes upon the textures, or which led the miner of those plateaux of America, where no fuel is to be found, to the discovery of that admirable method of obtaining silver by a sort of humide process.

All this will appear strange enough if I mention that, until a few years ago, the real nature of glass, soap, or leather was not understood, just as even now experiments are daily made to obtain an insight into what is going on in the smelting oven in soda manufacture.

As a last example to illustrate the inductive method, as applied to technical processes, I may choose the comparatively new art of photography, as some of the processes connected with it have not yet found their explanation.

Photography is chiefly based on two observations, first, that the salts of silver (chloride, bromide, iodide of silver) are blackened by exposure to light, and secondly, that these silver salts, when unaltered by light, are soluble in hyposulphite of soda, so that by means of this substance it becomes possible to separate the blackened from the unblackened silver.

These two facts constituted the starting point for the experiments of Daguerre in Paris, and those of Talbot in London, the latter endeavouring to obtain pictures on paper, the former on copper plates coated with silver.

In Talbot's experiments a picture was obtained by images of the camera obscura, such as of a tower or a house, acting for some time upon paper impregnated or coated with chloride or iodide of silver. Corresponding with the varying intensity of the light, those parts of the paper which were most exposed to it, became darkened in various shades, the shadowed parts remaining comparatively unaltered. The frame of a window, for instance, throws less light upon the paper than its glass panes, and a dark-coloured stone less than a bright one; all dark parts of the objects appeared bright, all bright ones dark; in fact, a so-called negative picture was formed on the paper. By now washing the paper with a

solution of hyposulphite of soda, that part of the silver coating which had not been decomposed by the light, was removed. Had it not been removed, the paper would have been uniformly blackened by the farther action of daylight, and the picture of course would have become obliterated. It was, therefore, by means of the hyposulphite of soda that the picture was *fixed*. The first pictures Talbot obtained were very imperfect; a long-continued action of the light being indispensable for their production, none but thoroughly immovable objects could be portrayed. An improvement in Talbot's mode of proceeding was brought about in a most strange way by experiments of Daguerre. Daguerre exposed his silvered plates to the action of iodine vapours, and in this way coated them with an extremely fine film of iodide of silver; but on these plates no picture was produced in the camera obscura. His experiments carried on for months and varied in manifold ways gave no result. Chance, however, in its most proper sense assisted him. A number of plates he had previously experimented upon in the camera obscura, had been put aside into an old cupboard, and they had remained there for weeks without being further noticed. But one day, in removing one of the plates, Daguerre to his greatest astonishment found on it an image of the most complete distinctness, the smallest details being depicted with perfect fidelity. He had no idea how the picture had come, but he felt sure there must be something in the cupboard which had produced it. The cupboard contained all sorts of things: tools and apparatuses, chemical re-agents, and amongst others a basin filled with metallic mercury. Daguerre now removed one thing after the other from the cupboard, with the exception of the mercury, and still he regularly obtained pictures, if the plates, which had previously been submitted to the action of images in the camera obscura, were allowed to remain for several hours in the cupboard. For a long time the mercury escaped his notice, and it almost appeared to him as if the old cupboard were bewitched. But at last it occurred to him that it must be the mercury to whose influence the pictures were owing. For as a drawing made with a pointed piece of wood on a clean pane of glass, remains invisible even to the most acute sight, but comes to light at once when breathed upon, owing to the condensation of the watery vapour deposited in small drops, taking place in a different manner on the parts touched with the wooden point and those left untouched: just so originated Daguerre's pictures.

Mercury being a volatile substance, the cupboard had become filled with its vapour, and this had deposited itself on the plates in the form of most minute globules in such a way that the parts most illumined were covered most and the shadowed parts less, the result being that the outlines and shades of all objects became distinctly visible. I will not here enter upon the improvements made in regard to the optical apparatus, nor do I wish to detail how one came to fix and make unalterable Daguerre's perishable pictures by depositing on them a thin film of gold; but, returning to the pictures on paper, I still wish to say a few words about

the influence Daguerre's discoveries had in improving the mode of proceeding as adopted by Talbot.

Daguerre had found, that if his prepared plates were exposed to the light, even only for a few seconds, a picture could be obtained by afterwards exposing them to the action of mercurial vapour. As Talbot used for the preparation of his paper the same materials Daguerre had on his plates, he concluded that the exposure of the paper for a few seconds to the action of the light in the camera-obscura must have produced an impression. Talbot was *convinced* there must be a picture on the paper, although he could not see the least trace of one. This *conviction* urged him on to seek something that would make it visible, for he had no doubt such a thing was really to be found.

How, now, came Talbot to use for this purpose a solution of gallic acid?

The solution of this problem most people might be inclined to attribute to chance, as was the case with Daguerre's pictures; but the selection of gallic acid was no chance. Daguerre had not put the basin with mercury into the cupboard for the sake of his experiments; his pictures were obtained without his doing anything for the purpose. Talbot, on the contrary, *searched* after the means suited to his special purpose, and from among many thousands of substances his imagination instinctively excluded all those that stood in no relation to it, and directed him to those which acted in a similar way to light.

* The salts of silver are blackened by warmed gallic acid as well as by light; the action of both is identical in kind, but gallic acid is by far the most powerful. The solar rays had, as he thought, produced an action on the prepared paper in the camera, but so slight that it was not visible; perhaps, so he concluded, this action might be continued and *increased* by means of gallic acid. The experiment succeeded, and the justness of the induction was thereby proved.

These examples may suffice to render generally intelligible the nature of induction. It will be seen that for Talbot's and Daguerre's purpose it was quite irrelevant to inquire *how* light and gallic acid act upon silver salts, and *why* silver salts dissolve in hyposulphite of soda.

Persons who are not familiar with the combinations of ideas produced by imagination, will of course not believe in them, and are generally inclined to ascribe every discovery to mere chance, should it even have been arrived at by most ingenious reasoning. Chance has its great share in discoveries, no doubt, just as even the understanding frequently derives the elements for its conclusions from so-called accidental circumstances. But from the circumstance that experimenting must be learned, that it is an art having its rules, and that, to practise it successfully, it is necessary to be acquainted with a great number of facts and phenomena, it becomes evident that it is founded on a peculiar working of the mind in which the understanding participates as spectator, frequently too as adviser and helpmate, but without conducting it, or without that working being dependent on it.

In science as well as in every-day life the operations of the mind are not conducted according to the rules of logic, but we generally take things to be true, and adopt a certain view about an occurrence, or the cause of a phenomenon before proving the correctness of our opinion. One does not arrive at the conclusion by means of syllogism, but the conclusion precedes, and the premises are only afterwards sought out for demonstration. In a conversation about the share which imagination takes in scientific working, one of the most renowned French mathematicians advanced the opinion, that by far the great majority of mathematical truths had not been arrived at by deduction, but by help of the imagination, or empirically, and he maintained this even in regard to the properties of triangles, of the ellipsis, &c. This is as much as to say, that without artistic genius the mathematician can achieve as little as the natural philosopher.

It is a matter of course that for deductive as well as inductive investigations, if they are to be successful, a certain range of knowledge is required; for deductive a thorough knowledge of the laws already known, which can be acquired by the help of books and lectures; for inductive investigations, an extensive acquaintance with the natural phenomena, to be obtained in chemical, physical, and physiological laboratories. As schools, laboratories are, as is well known, of modern origin, and their influence on the development of all departments in any way connected with natural sciences, cannot fail to be noticed by an attentive observer.

The inductive inquirer, for the solution of his problems, must combine acquaintance with natural phenomena; that is, knowledge of the nature and properties of things, with recollection of impressions on the senses, i.e., memory of sight, taste, and smell, and with a certain amount of ability and skill. The more extensive and comprehensive his knowledge of facts and phenomena, the greater, as we express it, his experience, the easier his work becomes to him. One who has experience has to make much fewer experiments than one who has none, and who has first to make himself acquainted with many phenomena which the other is already familiar with. For many purposes, therefore, experiments are unnecessary to the former, the combinations of processes or facts being already known to him. Both the deductive and the inductive inquirer commence the solution of problems in the same way. The one, like the other, starts from a complex idea, pertaining either to the understanding or imagination, of which generally only a part is true, whilst the rest is founded on erroneous conclusions or combinations. The deductive philosopher tests and experiments with ideas to find the truth, just as the inductive inquirer uses impressions on the senses to find the thing of which he is in search: both, by testing and improving, cast off, during their work, their erroneous views, and gradually find what was missing for the completion of that idea with which they commenced their inquiry. Often the idea from which they started is quite wrong, the right one being only developed during the investigation. This is the origin of the opinion of many of the greatest

observers, that working does everything, and that whatever theory stimulates working leads to discoveries.

In deductive inquiries, it is the *conviction* of the correctness of a (conclusional) *idea*, which urges on the inquirer's understanding to exercise its proper function; with the experimentalist, the conviction of the existence of a *thing* is the first and most powerful motive for setting his imagination to work. The discovery of a new fact or reaction, which may be brought in connection with the idea of something hitherto unknown, of something useful and important for industrial purposes or daily life, is sufficient to raise in many individuals the conviction of its existence; and it happens frequently enough that it really is discovered by several contemporaneously.

Reason and fantasy are equally necessary for science; to each of them belongs a certain defined portion of all problems occurring in natural philosophy and chemistry, in medicine and political economy, history and philology, and each occupies a certain space in these respective domains. The portion over which fancy presides is wider and more extensive in the very ratio that the positive knowledge encompassed by the understanding is undefined and vague. What characterizes progress is, that, with the increase of knowledge, those ideas vanish which had their origin in the imagination; and whereas, during the first period of science, fantasy has full sway, it afterwards subordinates itself to the understanding, and becomes its useful and willing servant.

Induction under guidance of the imagination is intuitive and creative, but, undefined and boundless; deduction under guidance of the understanding analyzes and limits, and is defined and measured.

What principally characterizes deductive examination in natural sciences is "measure," and the final aim of all its endeavours is to find an unalterable numerical expression for properties of things, processes, and phenomena. Imagination compares and discriminates, but does not measure; for to measure one must have a standard to measure by, and this is a product of the understanding.

When an art is developed into science, the advantage, scarcely enough to be appreciated, is, that the art, as such, with its individual character, is destroyed, being shaped into rules which can be acquired and taught, and through the knowledge of which even the ungifted acquires the power of the most gifted, most skilful, and most experienced practitioner, obtaining his object in the shortest, surest, and most economical way. This is the case in regard to agriculture and medicine, and the different branches of industry. What at first belonged to an individual then becomes the common property of all.

JUSTUS VON LIEBIG.

My Persecutors.

It is a prevalent idea that in free and happy England the days have long since passed away in which a man was subjected to persecution on account of his opinions; and I can only say, happy are those whose experience justifies them in entertaining a belief in the truth of this idea—mine does not. Whether it is that my case is an exceptional one, and I have been a “martyr to circumstances,” or, whether the old spirit of persecution is not so thoroughly eradicated from the human heart as is generally supposed, I am not able to determine; all that I know with that absolute certainty which alone justifies a positive and unqualified assertion is, that for some considerable time past I have been persecuted in a manner almost worthy of the good old times, for refusing to be “convinced against my will” that my own opinions upon a subject to which I shall presently refer are utterly erroneous, and those of sundry of my acquaintances infallibly correct. I am well aware that a man with a grievance is a bore and a social nuisance; and even apart from this restraining knowledge, I would not think for a moment of attempting to “ventilate” a mere grievance; for I scorn the idea of crying out about any of those potty annoyances* of every-day life which are exaggerated by grumblers until they assume the proportions of a grievance. I am no grievance-monger. I never wrote to the *Times* on the subject of “The Hotel Nuisance,” although I once had to pay a tavern bill for bed and breakfast which in point of extortion surpassed any transaction of the “sixty per-centers” of which I have ever heard or read, and which induced a sporting gentleman who had been charged a like amount for the same accommodation, to tell the proprietor of the tavern, that although he (the sporting man) did not know his (the proprietor’s) exact pedigree, he was confident he was full brother to a robber. So far, indeed, from being a grievance-monger, I may say for myself that I am a particularly long-suffering individual, and have borne, with fortitude or indifference, annoyances that would have driven any person of a less philosophical turn of mind than myself to despair and the police-courts. I have been importuned and abused by garotter-like mendicants, to whom I have given alms instead of handing them over to the police. I have been threatened and derided by the coarsest cabmen, with whose demands (generally about double their legal fare) I have complied, when others would have taken their number and “made an example of them.” I have even been taken before a bench of magistrates upon suspicion of being a burglar; this last decidedly unpleasant event occurring through the stupidity of a policeman, who stopped me as I was leaving my work late one winter night, carrying the implements of my trade, (which certainly have a strong

resemblance to the implements of a house-breaker) in a small bag. Into this bag A 1 insisted upon looking, and laughed to scorn the explanation which I offered to him, saying that I must tell that tale to the natives, and advising me to "come along" quietly, or he would put "the darbies" on me. With this inexorable guardian of the night I accordingly went, and was speedily consigned to a cell in which bed and board were synonymous terms, and from whence I was taken in the morning to be examined by the sitting magistrates, to some of whom I was fortunately known, and was consequently immediately discharged, thus escaping any of the inconveniences arising out of the "law's delays," while my captor, whose mistake was after all a very natural one, was severely censured in open court; one of "the great unpaid" going so far as to stigmatize him as a useless blockhead. These, and as many more of the small ills of life as would fill a volume, I have borne without a murmur, already convinced that "such is life."

Having thus, I trust, sufficiently demonstrated that I *can* "suffer and be strong" under the ordinary annoyances of life, and having incidentally mentioned a few of those annoyances that have fallen to my lot, but of which, be it understood, I do not complain, I will now speak of the persecution of which I *do* complain.

To begin, then, I belong to that portion of the community who are sometimes vaguely and collectively spoken of as "intelligent artisans," and I am engaged in the workshops of a firm who employ about five hundred men.* Among such a number of working men, it will readily be believed that there are some of almost every degree of intemperance, from the confirmed and frightful-example description of drunkard, to the one who only gets "elevated" upon rare and festive occasions, such as his own or an intimate friend's marriage, or a public banquet, at which he generally insists upon making a speech, proposing a toast, or taking some other active but uncalled-for and unappreciated part in the proceedings. But though it must be admitted that intemperance is but too prevalent a vice among working mechanics, it is by no means a prominent characteristic of the *class*. On the contrary, taken in the aggregate, they are a very temperate body of men, and among them may be found numerous representatives of "total abstinence" in all its extremes and modifications; from the "total abstainer," who has always been one, never having tasted intoxicating drinks, to the sensation-craving, procession-forming, medal-wearing, pledge-signing, and altogether ignoble "teetotaller," who is generally a recently reclaimed drunkard of the worst class, and upon whose continuance in his regenerated state but little reliance can be placed.

. Now it is some half-dozen of these rabid sons of abstinence who have become the bane of my existence by their fanatical attempts to induce me

* It ought to be stated that this is not a fancy sketch. The writer is really a working man.—Ed.

to sign "the pledge." There is a proverb which says that "there's a medium in all things;" but then there is another proverb to the effect that "there is no rule without an exception," and so, despite the dictum laid down in the first of these sayings, it is justifiable to conclude that there are things in which there is *no* medium; and one of them most undoubtedly is, the intolerant spirit with which the disciples of total abstinence seek to enforce their doctrines and practices upon all other members of society. To strive to promote the interests of what you conceive to be a good cause is highly commendable. But to insinuate that those who by reasoning you have failed to convert to *your* opinion will end their career on the gallows or in the madhouse, and that the transition stages to those undesirable consummations will consist of wife-beating, bankruptcy, moral degradation, premature physical decay, and unutterable sottishness, is to show a decided want of that medium which *ought* to characterize discussions of all matters of opinion. And it is this want of medium in the, no doubt, well-meant endeavours of my persecutors to induce me to sign "the pledge" that has converted what might have been a friendly discussion into a harassing persecution. "Well, why won't you sign it?" asks Bodgers (who is the spokesman and chief of my persecutors), in a tone of exasperation, after ineffectually endeavouring to convince me that a person who partakes of malt liquor, however sparingly, is little, if anything better than a murderer. "Come, give us your reasons, if you've got any," persists the indignant Bodgers, greatly disgusted that I do not instantly explain myself. In vain, when thus interrogated, I submissively express my conviction that in its place—that is, applied to incorrigible drunkards, or those who are conscious of a want of self-restraint where intoxicating drinks are concerned—the total abstinence pledge is a most praiseworthy institution. In vain I argue that even strong drinks may have their beneficial uses. In vain I urge that I am a man of temperate habits, that I believe the little drink that I do take does me good, and that even if I found it injured me, or I had any other motive for abstaining from it, I could and would do so without signing any pledge. To hear none of these or the other numerous reasons I bring forward in support of my refusal doth the obdurate Bodgers seriously incline. Moderation, Bodgers sententiously informs me, is the mother of intemperance, and to be good yourself, says the same authority, is not sufficient; you must set the example to others, and try to make them good. "So that, you see, you have not got a leg to stand on," remarks another abstainer. "Oh, he knows he's wrong," observes a third, "only he's too pig-headed to say so." And the rest of my persecutors give it as their joint opinion that "that (the last remark) is about the size of it," and that I would "have my own pig-headed way if a saint—(and only to a saint's do they consider Bodgers' eloquence second) were to come and tell me I was wrong."

Day after day am I subjected to attacks of this kind—attacks that, in addition to destroying my peace of mind, are rapidly impairing my

digestion, as they are generally made while I am at dinner, which meal I take, in common with my persecutors and many others, in the dining-room connected with the establishment in which I am employed. To be catechized, to be spoken to, and spoken *at* in this manner is bad enough, but the active part of my persecution is by no means the worst part of it. No! it is when I consider "what manner of men they be" who subject me to this treatment, that my cup of bitterness becomes full. When I remember that the abusive and dogmatic Bodgers of to-day is the same Bodgers who but one short year before was wont to sneak to his work by circuitous routes, in order to avoid the threats and entreaties of a number of publicans to whom he was indebted for drink,—the same Bodgers who met you in the street, and noisily importuned you to "stand a glass," or lend him "the price of a pint," and who loudly, sometimes blasphemously, resented any attempt to remonstrate with him upon his disgraceful conduct: when again I remember that Sturge (who calls me pig-headed) is the same person who a few months ago, figured in the local newspapers under the heading of "an old offender," or "Sturge again," and whose case generally appeared at the head of Monday's police intelligence in this style:—"John Sturge, a drunken and dissipated-looking man, well known at this court, was placed at the bar, charged for the —teenth time with being drunk and incapable. Police-constable B 4 deposed to finding the prisoner, &c., &c.—Fined five shillings:" when I remember, I say, that these are the men who assume the part of mentor, and rail not only against intemperance, but also against the moderate use of strong drinks, then I become enraged, threaten to thrash Sturge, and challenge Bodgers to pugilistic combat.

My persecutors were regular attendants at the weekly meetings of a total abstinence society of which they were members; and to these meetings they were constantly alluding in my presence, remarking to each other in a tone of voice loud enough for me to hear, that Jones (myself) ought to have been at "the meeting," and he would have heard something that would have done him good, and suggesting that I would not go to their meetings because I knew that if I did I would hear that which would compel me to alter my opinion on the subject of the pledge. Goaded to desperation by the continual taunts and impertinences of these persecuting abstainers, I at length, in the hope of obtaining peace, entered into a treaty with them; the terms of the treaty (which were proposed by themselves) being, that I was to accompany them to three of their meetings, and if after what I heard and saw at those meetings I still failed to see that it was the duty of every right-thinking person to take the pledge, they would, to use the phrase of one of their number, "give it up for a bad job," and cease to importune me any further upon the subject. To these terms I readily agreed, promising upon my part to weigh, without prejudice or partiality, all that I heard, and that I would not allow any feeling of personal opposition to Bodgers or others to interfere with my judgment. In order that I might not be at a loss to under-

stand the proceedings at these meetings, it would be necessary, Bodgers informed me, for him to explain to me the formation and object of the society. From his explanation I learned that the society consisted of about three hundred members, each of whom paid a small weekly contribution to a fund established for the purpose of rendering pecuniary assistance to any of the members whose case required it. The society had divided the town into twelve districts, the members in each of which were called a life-boat crew, and a captain was appointed over each crew. The duties of a captain were to look after the members in his district, and prevent, as far as lay in his power, any backsliding upon their part, to gain as many proselytes as possible, and to come forward at the weekly meetings of the society, and report upon the state of the crew, and the progress (if any) of "the cause" in the district under his control.

Bodgers, I need scarcely say, was a captain; and as in that capacity he was required upon the platform, he was unable to accompany me to the first of the three meetings, to which I was escorted by Sturge. The business of the meeting was to commence at eight o'clock, and about ten minutes before that hour I arrived at the meeting-house. The instant I entered the room I became painfully aware of the fact that I was regarded as the lion of the evening, for I had scarcely got through the doorway when a most significant murmur pervaded the room, and several loudly whispered expressions of "That's him," "Him with Sturge," "Here he is," and others of a like nature, reached my ears; and I felt that every eye was upon me as I followed Sturge to a seat near the platform. When the excitement caused by my entrance had somewhat abated, I ventured to take a look at the audience who had done me the honour of looking so intently at me, and I am bound to say that the result of my scrutiny was of anything but a gratifying nature. There were about two hundred persons present, and among them some highly respectable-looking individuals; but the predominant characteristic of a great majority of the countenances of the abstainers who formed the audience was dissipation—dissipation of a more or less marked character; and it was an unnecessary proceeding upon the part of the speaker who in the course of the evening addressed the meeting, to assure his hearers that a great number of those present had once been "slaves to drink," as that was to be plainly seen in dozens of cases, and the emancipation of many of them was evidently of a very recent date.

Having finished my survey of the audience, I turned my gaze upon the platform, just in time to witness the entrance of the chairman and captains upon it. The chairman upon this occasion (a fresh one was chosen each evening) was a stout, coarse-looking individual with a very red face, and a profusion of still redder hair. He was attired in a suit of seedy, ill-fitting black, and wore a rather cloudy-looking white neckcloth; and this dress, and the circumstance that his nose was of an unmistakeably "jolly" cast, gave him the appearance of one of the mutes attached to the staff of an economic funeral company. This mutish-looking gentleman, Sturge informed me in a whisper, was Mr. Bidder the furniture-broker

who once nearly killed himself by drinking, for a wager, a pint of raw rum in five minutes, and who, before he signed the pledge, seldom went to bed sober. Advancing to the front of the platform, the chairman, in a severe tone of voice, cried "Silence!" and having obtained silence he then gave out the words of a tetotal hymn, which was sung to the tune of "Ole Virginia Shore," and the burden of which was—

I've done my best, I've done my best, and I cannot do any more,
But I'll carry the seeds of temperance to every drunkard's door.

The hymn being finished, and a short prayer said, the business of the evening then commenced. Selecting one from a roll of papers that he held in his hand, Mr. Bidder, after again crying "Silence!" and "Order!" proceeded to say that, at the request of a number of the members, the committee of the society had written to that celebrated advocate of total abstinence the Whistling Waggoner, requesting to be informed when he could make it convenient to give one of his entertainments in this town. He now held in his hand the reply of the Waggoner, which was to the effect that he would be able to accommodate them in the course of a fortnight, and they might at once proceed to "bill" him. This announcement was received with great cheering, amid which the chairman sat down. When the applause had subsided, the chairman called out, "Captain of number one lifeboat crew, please to stand forward." In reply to this call, one of "the twelve" left his seat and advanced to the front of the platform, and said that all was going on smoothly in his district, and that the crew of which he had the honour to be captain were one and all steadfast in "the good cause." Captains two, three, and four reported to the same effect, and almost in the same words. This succession of good reports put the audience into quite a happy frame of mind. But human happiness is, alas! but transitory. The report of the fifth captain completely extinguished, for a time at least, the exultation raised by the four previous reports. The woe-begone expression of Number Five's countenance plainly indicated that his report would be of an unfavourable nature, and he evinced great reluctance to face his audience. So slow, indeed, was he in coming to the front that loud cries of "Time," "Toe the mark," "Come up to the scratch," "Go in and win," and other phrases that are only to be found in the vocabulary of "our pugilistic reporter," arose from all parts of the room. Seeing that his hesitation was producing an unfavourable effect upon his auditors, Number Five summoned up his courage, dashed to the front, and abruptly commenced the delivery of his report. His intelligence, he was sorry to say, was of a very disheartening nature. They all knew Finigan, the big Irishman who had joined their society about a month ago (cries of "Yes, yes"). Well, as some of them were probably aware, the committee had a few days since, at his (the captain's) recommendation, advanced the sum of two pounds to Finigan, to enable him to start in business as a greengrocer; but instead of expending the money in vegetables, Finigan had got drunk with it. He had then gone home, turned his mother out of doors, severely

beaten his wife, and attempted to bite a policeman's nose off, for which series of offences he was then undergoing a punishment of a month's imprisonment with hard labour (cries of "Serve him right"). "The worst part of the business," continued the captain, "is that there will be no chance of us ever getting the two pounds back again, and that is what grieves me; for the last party to whom the committee made an advance, upon my recommendation, cheated them out of thirty shillings." This recital of the brutal and ungrateful conduct of Finigan, together with the knowledge of the pecuniary loss sustained by the society in consequence thereof, served to throw a deep gloom over the meeting—a gloom which the ordinarily favourable reports of the next six captains failed to dispel. But all joy had not departed from among them: in the report of the last of the captains was consolation found. The manner of captain number twelve, as he came forward in obedience to the call of the chairman, startled the audience out of the sullen calmness into which they had sunk. There was an elasticity and lightness in his gait, and an expression of cheerfulness and triumph upon his countenance, that would have been a positive insult to his hearers unless accompanied by intelligence of an unusually pleasing character; and, happily for the peace of the meeting, his information was of a nature that fully justified the triumphant manner he assumed in giving it. The reports of the other captains had been made in the briefest possible manner; but Number Twelve, who evidently considered himself an orator, spoke at considerable length. He commenced by observing that "they had all heard some very discouraging intelligence that evening," and then went on to say that "the ungrateful behaviour of some of the individuals whom the society had assisted and befriended was almost enough to deter them from attempting to reclaim or benefit others. But though," he continued, "their kindness to those whom drink had brought to poverty and want was, alas! but too often repaid by the blackest ingratitude, and though their efforts to show the drunkard the error of his way had, in many instances, met with ridicule, scorn, and even blows, yet they could point with pride and pleasure to cases in which their humble endeavours had been productive of good—lasting and permanent good." After giving short biographies of several of the "rescued" persons in whom the society had been the means of effecting "lasting and permanent good," Number Twelve proceeded to inform his hearers that, since their last meeting, a name had been added to the list of "the rescued" that few would have ever thought of seeing there, and he felt sure that when they heard that name they would feel amply compensated for any disappointment they had experienced when they heard of Finigan's case. The person whose name he alluded to—he would use the name by which he was best known to the public—was "Fighting Joe!" The utterance of this name created an immense sensation, and the speaker's voice was lost amid bursts of cheering and cries of "No, no," "It can't be," "He'll break," which arose on all sides. When silence was at length restored, Number Twelve concluded his report, by repeating

most emphatically that, however improbable it might appear to some of them, it was nevertheless true that Fighting Joe had taken the pléde, and he for one firmly believed that he would keep it. The reports of the captains being finished, the chairman again came forward and announced that "one of their most highly-valued members had kindly consented to address them that evening."

The entrance of the "highly-valued member" was the signal for another encigetic burst of cheering, which he acknowledged by a bow that showed that that was not *his* first appearance on any stage; on the contrary, as I afterwards learned, he was the crack speaker of the society, and had been specially selected to astonish me. His subject was the "Evils of Moderation," and his discourse soon showed that he had been coached for the occasion by Bodgers. He was evidently bent on converting me by sarcasm, and at each fresh stab that he made at moderation, the abstainers regarded me with glances which said, "as plain as whisper in the ear," How do you like that, my fine fellow? and I could see that it was generally expected that I would show temper under the severe handling of the highly-valued member. In this expectation the disciples of abstinence were, however, doomed to disappointment. I kept my temper perfectly unruffled, which was easy enough to do, since the whole harangue of the speaker was a mere repetition of the proverbs and arguments I had heard from Bodgers scores of times, and they consequently failed either to anger or interest me. The address on the evils of moderation being concluded, and a vote of thanks awarded to the deliverer of it, the chairman dissolved the meeting, and the audience quietly dispersed. Outside of the meeting-house I was joined by Bodgers, who immediately began to try and draw me into a discussion, when I reminded him that one of the conditions of our treaty was, that teetotalism was to be a forbidden subject between us till I had attended the three meetings, but it was not till I had threatened to decline attending the other two meetings that Bodgers relinquished his efforts to "renew the subject."

The next meeting I attended was the one at which the Whistling Waggoner was to give his entertainment. The audience upon this occasion numbered upwards of three hundred, many of the general public being there in addition to the members; the admission this time being by payment, and the ordinary business of the weekly meetings being dispensed with. At the hour appointed for the commencement of the entertainment the Waggoner was ushered on to the platform, and was most enthusiastically received. When the plaudits evoked by his appearance had ceased, the chairman of the meeting introduced him to the audience as "one of the warmest and most able teetotal advocates we have;" and then modestly retired into the background, leaving the warm, able, and whistling advocate of teetotalism the observed of all observers. The Waggoner was, to use the language of my newspaper, "a thick-set and powerful-looking man, somewhat below the middle height," and his plump and sleek appearance testified to his being a good liver. His face was too fleshy to admit of any

expression, while his eyes were so small and so deeply sunk in his head as to preclude the possibility of catching their expression if they had any. His "get up" was a decided attempt at the clerical, and an equally decided failure: his whole appearance and manner being too suggestive of the waiter at one of those Gravesend establishments that supply tea and shrimps for ninepence.

The Waggoner's entertainment, of course, embraced the usual unauthenticated statistics, stock anecdotes, and pieces of clap-trap oratory of the professional teetotal lecturers. Drink once more destroyed its sixty thousand victims annually, slew more than the sword, filled our prisons and workhouses, our hospitals and asylums, and caused all our disease and poverty; and, in a word, drink was held up as the origin of "all the ills that flesh is heir to," and the great bar to human happiness here below. The old stone-breaker who drank ale in the summer to cool him, and in the winter to warm him, was again brought forward. The man who boasted that he had drank his bottle of port every day for forty years was again silenced by being asked, "Where are all your companions?" and the prisoner in the condemned cell, when asked what brought him there again, exclaimed, "Drink! drink!" "The first fatal glass" was descanted upon at considerable length; and it was, of course, implied that all who took that glass ultimately came to poverty and grief, and were fortunate if they escaped penal servitude or the madhouse.

The only original feature in the entertainment was the introduction of a number of teetotal songs, which were very well sung by the Waggoner, who possessed a good though uncultivated voice. These "songs of teetotalism" were of a wretchedly doggerel character. Compared with them, even "The Perfect Cure" would have appeared a sensible and elegant composition; however, they seemed to please the audience, who joined lustily in the chorus of the two entitled "I'll Drink Cold Water" and "No Alcohol for Me." At the termination of the entertainment, thanks to the crush at the door, I managed to elude Bodgers, who I knew would want to "renew the subject," and I had already had more than enough of it for one evening.

As there was no immediate prospect of another professional teetotal advocate visiting the town, it was agreed that I should attend the next ordinary meeting of the society, more by way of fulfilling the terms of the treaty into which I had entered than from any hope my persecutors now had of influencing my opinions; for when I informed them that the lecture of the Waggoner had in no way altered my views upon the subject of the pledge, they seemed to abandon all hope of my conversion. The chairman at this, the last of the three meetings "nominated in the bond," was no other than Sturge, who performed his duties in a highly creditable manner. The captains, with one exception, were all there, and each reported that all was well in his district. The absent captain was Number Twelve, who was unable to attend, owing to the effects of a severe thrashing he had received from Fighting Joe. Joe, as we learned from the statement of

the chairman, having, in addition to breaking the pledge, broken the nose of, and otherwise maltreated, the unfortunate captain of number twelve lifeboat crew. Joe, if appeared, had gone to the races, and was returning from them in a state of intoxication, when he was met by the captain, who taunted him with having so soon broken his promise; whereupon Joe instantly assaulted him in the manner described by the chairman. After the reports had been delivered and the absence of Number Twelve accounted for, a number of the members came upon the platform, to give an account of their "rescue," or speak of their "experiences." Some of them had taken the pledge because their friends had promised to pay their debts, procure them employment, or confer some other benefit upon them if they would do so; others for the purpose of saving money; and some for special reasons affecting only their particular cases: one man assigning the novel reason that he had been stung by the ingratitude of a publican whose house he had been in the habit of frequenting, in refusing to support him and his wife and family when he was out of work: nor did it seem to occur to him that the baker with whom he had been in the habit of dealing would probably have acted in the same ungrateful manner.

The experiences were as various as the reasons for taking the pledge. Some of the speakers had "for years been drunk every night," others had been in the habit of spending the greater portion of their earnings in the public-house, and, on some occasions, the whole of their week's wages had been consumed in the payment of the past week's "shot" and a Saturday night's "spree." Some had lost good situations through their habits of intoxication, and one villanous-looking character gleefully informed his hearers that he used to get drunk every Saturday night, and then go home and "whop" his wife, and smash the crockery; and, to judge by his countenance, he seemed capable of doing even worse things. The last of the speakers, after observing that for many years he had scarcely ever had a decent rag to his back, and was often without food, "all through drink," proceeded to dilate upon the fruits of teetotalism: the fruits in his case being, to use his own words, "this slap-up suit of black and this watch—" pulling the latter article out of his pocket. He entered into a detailed account of the manner in which he had accumulated the money to purchase the clothes and watch with, told the price of each separate article and the cost of the whole, turned his back to the audience to enable them to obtain a back view of the coat, exclaiming at the same time, "There's the fruits of teetotalism for you," and concluded a somewhat lengthy and perfectly idiotical address by holding the watch above his head and shouting, "Who wouldn't be a teetotaler?"

Some of these speakers had, according to their own confession, broken the pledge two, three, and one of them even five times; but the most painful part of this disgraceful exhibition was the absence of shame with which these men paraded the disgusting and brutal episodes of their lives before their fellow-men. That such men as these should be brought from a state of habitual and degrading drunkenness to one of total

abstinence from intoxicating drinks is a great blessing, not only to themselves but to society at large, and those who bring about the reformation of such men are justly regarded as benefactors of their race. But that such men, while the stamp of their bestial habits is yet uneffaced from their countenances, should inveigh against the moderate use of the stimulants which they had so grossly abused, is a most impudent proceeding, and one that tends to bring contempt upon the (in its proper sphere, the reclamation of habitual drunkards) truly Christian cause of teetotalism. And even in the case of those conscientious teetotalers who have never been drunkards, and those who, by years of unswerving consistency in their reformed habits, have earned the right to advocate the cause they profess, I think it an ill-advised proceeding to try to *force* their doctrines upon those who are and always have been of temperate habits, more especially as there is so extensive a field for their labours in weaning men from the curse of drunkenness.

On the morning after this last meeting my persecutors again made an attack upon me. One of them began by asking me if I still intended to "be stupid," and on my replying that I did not intend to take the pledge, Sturge reminded them that he had told them that I would have my own pig-headed way. Bodgers, however, upon this occasion came to my rescue, and commanded "those of his inclining" to hold their noise while he and Jones reasoned the matter over. Bodgers' reasoning and arguments would have been very good had they been applied to a drunkard, but they were not at all applicable to my case, as Bodgers himself and even the most fanatical of his admirers was perfectly willing to admit that I never got drunk, never spent my evenings in a public-house, never neglected any duty for the sake of drink, and that I certainly was a temperate man. "Still," urged Bodgers, "you ought to take the pledge, for you are not sure that you will always be able to remain the same moderate man that you now are, and, even if you are, you will still be doing a great injury to the cause of teetotalism, for unreflecting drunkards will point to such as you as a proof that drink may be taken without any evil resulting from it. But that evil will come of it," concluded Bodgers, emphatically, "is as sure as that eggs are eggs." Although Bodgers spoke with greater sense and moderation upon this occasion than he had ever done before, his eloquence was unavailing, and the result of our discussion was that I told him respectfully but firmly, that I must positively, and once for all, decline joining a body of men who wore medals, formed processions, and otherwise took credit to themselves for simply doing what was the duty of every man, namely, keeping sober. This decision by no means pleased my persecutors, who, despite the terms of our treaty, immediately renewed and have since continued their persecution of me.

A year has passed since I attended the last of the three teetotal meetings, and though during that time Bodgers has returned to his "former habits," and now exercises his persuasive eloquence in inducing reluctant landlords to give him credit for "just another pot," and negotiating loans

for "the price of a pint," and Sturge has several times made his appearance at the police-court on the old familiar charge of being "drunk and incapable," those of my persecutors who have remained true to "the good cause," and the more recently "rescued" individuals who have joined their ranks, continue their persecuting effort with unabated fierceness. And they joyfully look forward to that teetotalers' millennium (which, with the fatuity peculiar to bigots and fanatics, they assert to be near at hand) when the Permissive Bill shall reign supreme. And that bill once made law, they cheerfully assure me I must be prepared to bid a long farewell to that glass of XX which, in the summer months, is often the only thing that gives me an appetite for the solid food which, from the hot and laborious nature of my daily employment, I stand in need of, or which enables me to continue at my work when, from the effects of the combined heat of a July sun and a large blacksmith's shop, I am unable to take a sufficient quantity of food. My persecutors suggest dinner pills as a substitute for porter; but I have an extreme aversion to drugs under any circumstances, and certainly shall not take them while so pleasant a black draught as bottled stout has "the desired effect." They also bring forward a number of total abstinence theories to show that it *cannot* be the stout or pale ale that I drink which does me so much good, because (according to their theories) all alcoholic drinks are injurious to health. As not only doctors, but theorists also, disagree upon this question, I shall not attempt to decide it. But I may observe, as a matter of fact, that I enjoy as good health as any teetotaler that I have ever met, and better health than the majority of them; though this may be because the constitutions of many of them are impaired through early excesses or illness, consequent upon a sudden transition from a state of chronic drunkenness to one of total abstinence. And I have invariably noticed that among working men, those who drink from half-a-pint to a pint of ale or porter with their mid-day meal, but who rarely touch stimulating drinks at other times, require a less quantity of solid food than teetotalers. The appetite of a teetotaler often borders on the voracious, and the quantity of bread that some of them eat is "a caution." This great appetite is one of their proudest boasts, but in my opinion it is a mistaken one, for sick-headaches and the numerous other complaints arising from indigestion, prevail to a marked extent among the teetotalers in the working classes, and the feeling of excessive repletion caused by their inordinate meals often interferes materially with their activity and capability of enduring fatigue.

To conclude, then, my persecutors lead me a terrible life still, but they do not have matters all their own way, for when one of them "breaks out," or when I can show them the newspaper containing an account of an additional appearance upon the part of Sturge at the police-court, or inform them that the landlord of the "Lame Duck" is waiting outside the workshop-gate to effect the capture of Bodgea, against whom he has "a long chalk," I have my hour of triumph.

Benvenuto Cellini.

No name in the history of Italian art is more renowned than that of Benvenuto Cellini. Yet this can hardly be attributed to the value of his works ; for though, while he lived, he was the greatest goldsmith of his time, an excellent musician, a poet, a skilled medallist, and an admirable statuary, yet few of his many masterpieces survive. The gold and silver ornaments which bear his name are only in some rare instances genuine ; and the bronze *Perseus*, which still stands in the Loggia dei Lanzi at Florence, alone remains to show how high he ranked among the later Italian sculptors. In one respect, however, he commands our interest more particularly than any of his fellow-workers in the field of art. He left behind him at his death a full and graphic picture of his long and stormy life. It is probably to this circumstance that he owes his great celebrity. The vigorous and vivid style of this autobiography, its intense individuality, the variety of its incidents, and the amount of information it contains, place it high both as a life romance and also as a work on art. One might fancy that Lesage and Fielding had made this book a pattern for their novels. Parini and Tiraboschi unite in esteeming it the most delightful book in the whole range of Italian letters, and Walpole called it "more amusing than any novel." On the other hand it presents to us an admirable picture of an artist's real life in the sixteenth century at Rome, Paris, and Florence. Cellini represents his century, embodying its genius in his writings, in his actions, and in his art ; his life was inextricably involved with that of some of the most distinguished men of his age ; his works are national, and serve to illustrate the principles of taste and fashion then in vogue. He was essentially an Italian of the Cinque-Cento period. His passions were the passions of his countrymen ; his errors were the errors of his time ; his eccentricities were the eccentricities of the Renaissance. Of course we do not mean that all Italian artists were like Cellini, or deny that he, as an individual, would have been remarkable for violence of passion in any age ; but what we read of popes and princes in Burchard and Guicciardini, or of painters in Vasari's *Lives*, makes us sure that Cellini could not have been looked upon by his cotemporaries as a monster of iniquity, or even as an exceptionally profligate person. The fact is that his fellow-citizens held him in high esteem, and buried him with public ceremonies. He wrote the memoirs which excite our astonishment in the leisure of his age, and gave them to his friends to read without expressing shame. Even Vasari, who was personally on bad terms with him, gives witness that he "always showed himself a man of great spirit and vivacity, bold, active, enterprising, and formidable to his enemies ; a man, in short, who knew as well how to speak to princes as to exert himself in his art." Therefore, when we read the long list of

crimes which he has complacently recorded in his life, we must remember that the standard of morality has changed in Europe, and that one we call a desperate bravo passed then for a man of courage and ability.

Cellini was born of a good family at Florence, on the night of All Saints' day in 1500, and was called Benvenuto to record his parents' joy at having a son. His father, who seems to have been a man of taste and cultivation, wished to make him a musician; and Cellini in consequence for some years played the flute attentively, but much against his will. He showed a decided preference for the art of design, and at the age of fifteen engaged himself to a goldsmith called Marcone. This gave old Giovanni Cellini some annoyance; but Benvenuto, like a dutiful son, continued to play to his father in the intervals of business, upon the hated flute and horn. While engaged in the workshop of Marcone, Benvenuto got into a scrape, and had to fly from Florence for a time. He travelled about, visiting Siena, Bologna, and Pisa, and working assiduously in the shops of goldsmiths. It must not be thought that this education was a mean one for so great an artist. Painting and sculpture in Italy were looked upon far more as trades than we are wont to consider them. The artist had his "bottega" or shop just as much as the cobbler or the blacksmith, and an apprenticeship to goldsmiths' work was considered in Florence an almost indispensable commencement of a great career. Brunelleschi, Botticelli, Verocchio, Ghiberti, Pollajuolo, and Luca della Robbia, all underwent this preliminary training before they embarked upon the higher arts. It has been well observed that the goldsmith's art is an epitome of all the arts of design. A French writer on archæology points out the intimate connection between the work of the architect and of the goldsmith in mediæval cathedrals, the one attempting to represent the infinite magnitude of Nature, the other to follow her through all the details of her beauty. As the goldsmith's art was understood in Florence, it embraced a knowledge of painting, sculpture, and architecture. It required the greatest patience of execution and delicacy of design. It forced the student, from an early age, to deal with the actual materials of his art; so that later on in life he was not tempted to leave, as modern artists do, a portion of his work to journeymen and hirelings. No labour seemed too minute, no metal was too mean, for the exercise of his skill and inventive powers. Art ennobled all that he was called upon to do, whether cardinals required him to make them silver vases for their dinner tables; or ladies came to get their jewels set; or knights sent sword-blades to be mounted; or kings desired new palaces with statues, gates, and fountains in their courts; or poets asked to have their portraits cast in bronze; or grand dukes needed medals to commemorate their victories; or popes and bishops wished to place carved reliquaries on the altars of their patron saints; or men of fashion ordered medallions of Leda and Adonis to wear upon their necks or in their hair. All these branches of art men like Cellini practised, and they gave the same amount of conscientious toil to each. The consequence was that at the time of the Renaissance every-

thing was picturesque or beautiful. Furniture, clothes, plate, houses, and jewels, were alike the subjects of true art.

At the end of about a year Benvenuto returned to Florence, and began to study the cartoons of Michael Angelo, for whom he had the greatest admiration. He must already have acquired considerable reputation as a craftsman, for about this time Torrigiani invited him to go to England and enter the service of Henry VIII. This irascible and envious artist gained celebrity by breaking Michael Angelo's nose while studying with him in the Chapel of the Carmine at Florence. Seeing Benvenuto at work upon Michael Angelo's designs he told him the story of this youthful exploit. "His words," says Cellini, "raised in me such a hatred of the fellow, that far from wishing to accompany him to England, I could not bear to look at him." One of the best points in Cellini's character was his profound and reverential love for Michael Angelo. He calls him "il divino Michel agnolo," and speaks about "la bella maniera" of the mighty sculptor, readily acknowledging his superiority, although he thought no other artist fit to hold a candle to himself. Every word of commendation he received from Michael Angelo was treasured up and carefully recorded, nor could he find a better climax for the hyperbolic praises which he lavished on his own statue of Perseus, than by saying that Michael Angelo could scarcely have surpassed it. We may conceive, therefore, that he bore no love to Torrigiani, and did not care to swell the list of recruits whom that artist was beating up among the young men of ability at Florence. Besides, the idea of travelling to England and spending some years among the barbarous islanders—"questi diavoli. . . quelle bestie di quegli Inglesi," as he calls them—was repugnant to a Florentine.

Instead of leaving for England, Cellini, having quarrelled with his father about his flute-playing, sauntered out one day toward the gate of San Piero Gattalini. There he met a friend called Tasso, who had also quarrelled with his parents, and the two boys agreed to trudge away to Rome. "My good friend, Tasso," said Cellini, "it is the work of God that we have reached this gate without our own intention: now, since I have come so far, I seem to have done half the journey." So the boys walked on, wondering as they went "what will the old folks say to-night?" but settling not to think of that until they reached Rome. Cellini found employment there and stayed two years. At the expiration of this time he returned to Florence, but soon involved himself in a quarrel and stabbed a young man called Guasconti, for which offence he was again obliged to fly to Rome. These frays recur continually among the adventures which Cellini has recorded in his life. He says that he was "naturally somewhat choleric," and describes the access of his anger as a sort of fever, lasting sometimes for days, preventing him from taking food or sleep, making his blood boil, inflaming his eyes, and never suffering him to rest until he had revenged himself by murder or at least by blows. We have, by an effort, to recall the state of public morality at that time in Europe, in order to understand how Cellini can talk with unconcern

and even self-complacency of his homicides. In a sonnet to Bahdinelli, he compares his victims with the mangled statues of that bad sculptor, much to his own satisfaction.

De vivi ho percosso io ; vi molti sossi
Tracassati e distrutti ; qual si rede
Biamo a voi : è mia cuopre la terra.

Nor does he speak with any shame of the savage treatment which he inflicted on a woman who sat to him as a model and whom he hauled up and down his room by the hair of her head. It is true that on this occasion he regrets having in a moment of blind fury spoiled two of the best arms which he had ever drawn from. He records with triumph acts of spite which we should blush to think of—stabs in the dark, and such a piece of revenge as cutting several beds to bits in the house of an innkeeper who had offended him. His truculency and bullying were past description. When any one opposed him in his schemes or entered into competition with him as an artist, he instantly swaggered up with hand on hilt and said he would run him through the body if he did not mind his business. This furious temper led him into a thousand diverting scrapes which he records with admirable gravity and humour. At the same time he is thoroughly contented with himself, and attributes the success of his own violence in subduing and maltreating people to the providence of God. "I do not write this narrative," he says, "from a motive of vanity, but merely to return thanks to God who has extricated me out of so many trials and difficulties ; who likewise delivers me from those that daily impend over me. Upon all occasions I pay my devotions to him ; call upon him as my defender and recommend myself to his care. I always exert my utmost efforts to extricate myself ; but when I am quite at a loss, and all my powers fail me, then the force of the deity displays itself—that formidable force which, unexpectedly, strikes those who wrong and oppress others, and neglect the great and honourable duty which God has enjoined on them." We shall have occasion later on to discuss his religious opinions, but here it may be remarked that the feeling of this passage is thoroughly genuine and consistent with the spirit of the times. Men took a pride in the indulgence of their passions, and thought violence a virtue, so long as they refrained from treachery and acts of cowardice. Cellini almost cried with mortification on one occasion when he had to tell a lie, but he boasts of at least one deliberate murder, and would rather hack a man to pieces than pass by a taunt in silence. This temper explains much that seems to us exaggerated in the dramatic literature of the day. Bloodshed and ungovernable passions were familiar in the daily course of life. From the date of his second visit to Rome, Cellini's life divides itself into three marked periods—the first spent in the service of Pope Clement the Seventh, the next in Paris at the Court of Francis, and the third at Florence under Cosimo de Medici. On arriving in Rome his extraordinary abilities soon brought him into notice at the Papal Court. The Chigi family, the Bishop of Salamanca, and the Pope himself, employed

him to make various ornaments and pieces of plate. In consequence of a dream in which his father appeared and warned him to recommence the study of music, he entered the pope's service as a flutist. This bugbear of music followed him until his father's death, and then we hear no more of it. He spent his time to his own satisfaction: drawing the Roman ruins, shooting pigeons, quarrelling, fighting duels, defending his shop against the attacks of robbers, beating Moorish pirates on the shore by Cerveterra, and constantly producing some *chef d'œuvre* in gold or silver. A little incident which he describes at length enables us to see the life of artists at this period. He tells us that there was at Rome a society of painters and sculptors, among whom were numbered Giulio Romano and other scholars of Raphael. These men met twice a week to sup together, and to spend some hours in the enjoyment of music and in reading out the sonnets which they had composed. Cellini on one occasion dressed up a youth called Diego as a woman, and took him to this meeting, which he describes as being of the most splendid description.

It may not here be out of place to remark how entirely the artists of the Renaissance were absorbed in their admiration for corporeal beauty. Art and life were alike to them one perpetual enjoyment of the sense, untroubled by reflection, and unidealized by striving after lofty aims. Michael Angelo alone is an exception to this remark. He, like Milton, was "a star, and dwelt apart." But the great Venetian and Roman masters simply loved and painted what was splendid and luxurious in the open world around them. Where we require expression and intellectual significance they were content with finely-developed muscles, youth, activity, and loveliness of form. The habits of the day, voluptuous yet hardy, fostered this development of art. Men cultivated their bodies more carefully than their minds, and had no Puritanical reserve about the pleasure they derived from their senses. The asceticism of the Middle Ages, which regarded the body as an object of shame and pity, had expired, giving place to the classical admiration of pure form. Images, and not ideas, prevailed in art. Men were educated by their senses only, and they sought to express the most abstract conceptions—such as resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell—by harmonious arrangements of the human person. In this respect the Italians resembled the Athenians. We all know what reverence the Greeks felt for beauty, how their philosophers considered it synonymous with goodness, and how in their statues they sacrificed intensity of expression to melody and grace. It is said that Philippus a young warrior in the train of Darius, was worshipped by the Egæans for the beauty of his form. And Herodotus mentions Callicrates, a Spartan youth, among the heroes of Plataea, not for his valour, but simply because he was the most distinguished Greek for beauty. Vasari relates similar anecdotes about the painters of his day which illustrate this characteristic of the Renaissance. Luca Signorelli, for instance, had a son of beautiful features and person. He died by an accident, whereupon Luca stripped his body and painted

the naked boy as a memorial of his beauty, and to satisfy his longing love. This to our mind is a curious mode of solacing paternal grief. But the body seemed to Luca something sacred, and an object of veneration for its loveliness. Acting under the same feeling, Michael Angelo introduced a group of naked men into his picture of the "Holy Family" at Florence, though they have nothing to do with the subject, thinking them an ornament worthy in themselves to grace religion. It is well known how deeply attached both he and Leonardo were to persons of great beauty. We are told that the latter would follow such for a whole day, in order to drink in the harmonies of the human form. But, unfortunately, this passionate love of beauty was not connected with any genuine veneration for nature, such as the Hellenic worship engendered. Moreover, it rose up as an antagonistic principle to that religion which had animated early Italian art. And so, in course of time it degenerated into mere sensuality, and the most unmeaning mannerism. Art became a skilful selection of beautiful forms. It wholly lost its Christian character, and failed to inspire classic subjects with real life. In Cellini's days a handsome youth upon a pedestal was what an artist called a god. And Cellini was the last of the Grecians in sculpture. What he says of Paulino who "smiled in so graceful and affecting a manner that I am not surprised at Greek fables about the gods," of Cencio, of Faustina, and of Angelica, proves him to have been most susceptible to the charms of physical beauty. Yet he has not animated his Persens, his Ganymede, or his personification of Fontainebleau with a vestige of intellectual or moral loveliness. The vacancy of expression which pervades their "faultily faultless" features, proves the depth of degradation to which art had sunk.

But to return to the narrative. The real sex of Diego was of course disclosed, and Benvenuto incurred the bitter animosity of one of the women present at this supper. This led him into a quarrel with Luigi Pulci, in which the dagger, as usual, played a great part. During the summer of 1527, Rome was besieged and occupied by the Imperial army. The Pope took refuge in the castle of St. Angelo, and there held out against his Spanish and German foes. Cellini, as is well known, lays claim to having shot the Duke of Bourbon dead with his own hand, and wounded the Prince of Orange. It is certain that he was an expert marksman, and that he did the Pope good service by directing the artillery of St. Angelo. One of the most interesting and animated portions of his autobiography is occupied with an account of these exploits in the castle. If we were to give credit to all his assertions, we should believe that the Pope regarded him as generalissimo of his forces, and that nothing memorable happened without his intervention. But Cellini's whole life, in his own opinion, was a miracle. The very hailstones which fell upon his head could not be grasped in both hands. His gun and powder brought down birds which no one else could reach. His hairbreadth escapes, his prowess, his dexterity, the antiquity of his family, the egregious praises conferred upon him by his friends, the confusion of

his foes, are never-ending themes for his huge self-conceit. While desiring to be sincere, and certainly most circumstantial in his details, there is no doubt that he unconsciously exaggerated everything that concerned himself. During the siege he says:—"My drawing, my studies of the beautiful, and my excellent musical accomplishments, were all stunned by the noise of the artillery." When it was over he paid a visit to Florence, and there found that his father and some other relatives had died of the plague. His brother Cecchino, however, and his sister Liperata had survived. With them he spent a pleasant evening, for Liperata "having for a while lamented her father, her sister, her husband, and a little son that she had been deprived of, went to prepare supper, and during the rest of the evening there was not a word more spoken of the dead, but much about weddings. Thus we supped together with the greatest cheerfulness and satisfaction imaginable." In these sentences we do not read the avowal of any particular hard-heartedness, but only the careless familiarity with loss and danger which war, famine, and plague had engendered in the men of that time. Cellini gladly risked his life in a quarrel for any one of his friends, but he would not sadden the present by reflecting on inevitable accidents. This volatile temper pervades the whole of his character. His affections were strong, but very fleeting. It would be hard to enumerate all the love affairs of different kinds to which he incidentally alludes. Yet the one serious passion he describes made him miserable for only a few days. His mistress ran away and left him "on the point of losing his senses or dying of grief." Yet two months after we find him "indulging in pleasures of all sorts, and engaged in another amour to cancel the memory of the Sicilian." Nor does this argue in him an insensibility to the duties of life. On hearing of the death of his first son, "the excess of grief quite disconcerted and confounded" him; and when his sister was left a widow with six children, he took them all into his house without even bragging about what after all appears to have been the best action of his life. Not long after this visit to Florence, his brother Cecchino was murdered by a musketeer at Rome. Cellini, after nursing his revenge, went out one evening, stole upon the murderer, and stabbed him in the back. He left his dagger in the nape of his victim's neck, and retired for refuge to the house of the Duke Alessandro. The whole matter reached the ear of the Pope, for whom Cellini was at work on some Crown jewels. The Pope sent for him, and simply said, "Now that you have recovered your health, Benvenuto, take care of yourself." This shows how little they thought of homicide in Rome.

An old fisherman, when questioned about the murder of the Duke of Gandia, said that he had seen more than a hundred bodies thrown into the Tiber on different nights, at the same place, and never troubled himself about one more than another. If you killed a man, you had to seek some powerful protector, and avoid your victim's relatives. When Cellini, a short time after this occurrence, stabbed his enemy Pompeo, two cardinals

were anxious to screen him from pursuit, and fought among themselves for the privilege of harbouring so talented a criminal. The Pope, with marvellous good humour, observed, "I never heard of the death of Pompeo, but often of Benvenuto's provocation. So let a safe conduct be instantly made out, and that will secure him from all manner of danger." Some one ventured to insinuate that this was dangerous policy; but the Pope put him down by saying, "You do not understand these matters. I must inform you that men who are masters of their profession, like Benvenuto, should not be subject to the laws." Indeed, the laws seem altogether to have been a mere *brutum fulmen*. Cellini, when he was poisoned by a parish priest at Florence, never thought of suing him for the wrong which he had done; and in the case of his own murders he only dreaded retaliation. Once, and only once, the civil arm came down upon him, when the city guard attempted to arrest him for the murder of Pompeo. But he bent them off with swords and sticks; and, after all, it appeared that they had only been acting at the instigation of a duke whom Cellini had offended.

During this period of his residence at Rome, Cellini witnessed an incantation conducted in the Colosseum by a priest of Sicily. His description of this incident is one of the most powerfully written passages of his memoirs. The conjuror and Cellini, accompanied by two friends of his, and by a boy who was to act as a kind of medium, went by night to the amphitheatre. The magic circle was prepared: fires were lighted, and perfumes scattered on the flames. The necromancer began his charms, calling, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, on the leaders of the infernal legions to appear. Immediately the whole amphitheatre was filled with troops of phantoms, surging up on every side, rushing downwards from the galleries, issuing from subterranean caverns, and making hideous signs of fury. All the party were thrown into consternation, except Cellini, who, though terribly afraid, kept up the fainting spirits of the rest. At last, the conjuror summoned courage enough to ask the demons when Cellini might hope to be restored to his lost love Angelica. They answered—how we are not told—that he would find her ere another month had passed away. Then they redoubled their attacks; the necromancer said the danger was most imminent; and morning broke upon them cold with fear. In order to understand the full effect of this scene, we must remember how profoundly even the most scientific men believed in magic at that time, and how the spirits of the dead were thought to haunt deserted ruins. The magnitude of the Colosseum, the mystery of its origin, and the terrible uses to which it had been put in Roman days, invested it with peculiar superstitious horror. It was believed that when it fell Rome would perish and the world would end. Robbers haunted its huge caves. Rubbish and dead weeds choked up its passages. Sickly trees grew among the porches, and the moon peered through the windows of its galleries. Nor had the palaces of the Farnese and the Barberini yet been built up from its ruins. It was even more gigantic then than it is now. Place the necromancers and their fire in the centre of this space. Let the wind sweep clouds

across a stormy sky, and moan among the lairs from which the wild beasts used to rush. Fancy the priest's muttered spells, the sacred names which he pronounced in his unholy rites, the shuddering horror of the conscience-stricken accomplices, and Cellini with defiant mien but quailing heart—and we can believe he saw more than the amphitheatre contained.

It has been conjectured that the phantoms were projected by the conjuror from a magic lantern on the smoke that issued from his heaps of blazing wood. These volumes of vapour, agitated by the wind, and rolling upward in thick spiral, were well fitted to reflect the images thrown upon them from a lantern, and to show them as receding and approaching, and varying in number and in shape. Whatever was their cause, Cellini certainly believed in their reality. Indeed he was not at all above the superstitions of his day. He describes a salamander, which his father showed him, "living and enjoying itself in the hottest flames;" and he relates with detail how a light appeared above his own head, and might be constantly observed by those to whom he chose to show the marvel. There were, however, he continues, with mysterious gravity, not very many to whom he had disclosed the fact.

The next four years were spent by Cellini at Rome. He took one journey to Venice, and was laid up for a long time on his return by a severe attack of the terrible disease which then was ravaging Europe, attacking kings and cardinals, and puzzling physicians. In April, 1527, having quarrelled with the Pope, he set out for France with two of his workmen. They passed through Florence, Bologna, Venice, and Padua, and crossed the Grisons by the Bernina and the Albula. Cellini says nothing about the journey till he reaches the Lake of Wallenstadt, on which he was nearly wrecked. He must have gone through some of the most romantic scenery of Switzerland at the best time of the year. Yet not a word escapes him of the beauty of the mountains or the flowers, or about the wonder of the glaciers which he saw for the first time. Mountains to Italians of the sixteenth century, as to the ancient Greeks and Romans, were simply horrible, repellent from their height and cold, and gloom and solitude and danger. The pleasure which we derive from contemplating savage grandeur was unknown to them. On the Lake of Wallenstadt Cellini met with a party of Germans whom he cordially hated. The Italians embarked in one boat and the Germans in another, Cellini being under the impression that the German lakes would not be so likely to drown him as those of his own country. However, when a storm came on, he got into a fright, and went on shore as soon as possible, disembarking his horses and luggage at the foot of a steep pass, and scrambling up with the greatest difficulty. "Those devils of Germans," as he calls them, went on merrily in front, and fell to drinking hard when they had reached their inn. That night he passed in a village where he "heard the watch sing at all hours very agreeably, and as the houses were of wood, he was constantly bidding them take care of their fires." Next day they arrived at Zurich, "a fine city which may be compared to a jewel for

lustre." This remark is true, and shows that Cellini was not dead to the beauty of Swiss towns, though he disliked their mountains. In course of time he reached Paris, and was introduced to Francis. But falling ill and feeling restless, he returned to Italy by the Simplon. When he reached Rome he was arrested by the order of Pope Paul the Third, and thrown into the dungeons of St. Angelo. Cellini had been so unlucky as to incur the hatred of Pier Luigi Farnese, the Pope's natural son, who, hearing a rumour of Cellini's having stolen some crown jewels during the pontificate of Clement, induced his father to imprison him. The ground of suspicion was this :—Cellini, during the siege of Rome, had been employed by Clement to melt down the tiaras and papal ornaments, in order that Clement, when he escaped to Orvieto, might secure them easily. He did so, and confessed to having stolen part of the setting of these jewels; for which crime Clement gave him absolution. The Farnese, however, believed that he had stolen and concealed a vast amount of gold, which Pier Luigi was determined to recover, and at all events to wreak his fury on a victim he detested. On being arrested, Cellini called heaven and earth to witness that he was innocent, and thanked his stars he had "the happiness not to be confined for any criminal excess of passion, as generally happens to young men." Whereupon "the brute of a governor interrupted me, and said, 'Yet you have killed men enough in your time.' " We cannot but think that this remark was very pertinent, but it provoked a torrent of abuse and a long enumeration of his services from the virtuous Cellini. His account of this imprisonment, and of the hypochondriacal governor who thought that he was a bat, and used to flap his arms and squeak when night was coming on, is very entertaining. So also is the minute description of his escape from the castle. In climbing over the last wall Cellini fell and broke his leg, and was carried by a poor waterman to the palace of the Cardinal Cornaro. Cornaro promised to protect him, but eventually exchanged him for a bishopric. This remarkable proceeding illustrates the manners of the Papal Court. Cornaro wanted a see for one of his servants, and the Pope wished to get a man he hated once more into his power. So the two ecclesiastics bargained together, and by mutual kind offices attained their ends. Poor Cellini, with his broken leg, went back to languish in the prison. He found the mad governor enraged with him, because he had "flown away," and had eluded his bat's wings and eyes. So he was treated with more than usual rigour. At first a dread possessed him of being flayed alive, for he found himself incarcerated in a kind of condemned cull. It happened, however, through the intercession of a lady who befriended him, that the Pope renounced his intention of putting Cellini to so infamous a death. But other enemies were at work, and the dust of a pounded jewel was mixed up with his food to poison him. Cellini, knowing the properties of stones, and perceiving the broken crystals among the remnants of a salad he had eaten, examined them attentively, and found to his joy that they were not of a sufficiently hard

kind to cause his death. These two escapes from destruction sobered his mind. His broken leg caused him acute anguish. He was placed in a dungeon below ground, where the preacher Fojano had been starved to death. The floor was dank, and infested with tarantulas and other reptiles. A few reflected sunbeams, for two hours in the afternoon, was all the light that entered through a little aperture. Here Cellini lay alone, unable to move from pain, with hair and teeth falling away, and with nothing to occupy him but a Bible and a book of Chronicles. However, his spirit was indomitable. He sang Psalms, and wrote verses in praise of his prison; and, finding a piece of charcoal, made a great drawing of angels surrounding God the Father, on his wall. Once only his courage gave way, and, determining on suicide, he so placed a beam that it should fall upon him like a trap. When all was ready, an unseen hand took hold of him and dashed him on the ground at some distance from the beam. From this moment Cellini's cell was visited by angels who comforted him and healed his broken leg, and reasoned with him of religion. He read his Bible attentively, and prayed to God. Cellini's account of his visions reminds us of Savonarola, with whose writings he had become acquainted during his first imprisonment. There is no doubt that, impressed with the grandeur of Savonarola's dreams, he was emulous of reproducing them, and laying claims for himself to inspiration. One of these visions is particularly striking. Cellini had prayed fervently that he might see the sun, at least in dreams, if it were impossible that he should ever look on it again with natural eyes. But while awake and in possession of his senses, an angel hurried him away and took him to a narrow street, one side of which was bright with sunlight, but the sun himself was hidden. Cellini asked the angel how he might behold the sun, and the angel pointed to some steps upon the wall of a house. Up these Cellini climbed, and came into the full light of the sun, so that, although dazzled by its fierceness, he gazed steadfastly and took his fill. While he looked, the whole rays of the sun fell away upon the left side, and the disc shone like a bath of molten gold. This surface swelled, and from its glory came the figure of a Christ upon the cross, which stood beside the rays. Again the surface swelled, and from its glory came the figure of Madonna and her Child, which stood beside the cross. And between them was St. Peter in his sacerdotal robes, praying for Cellini's life, and "full of shame that such foul wrong should be done to Christians in his house." This vision strengthened Cellini's soul, and he began to hope for liberty. When free again he carved the figures he had seen in gold.

Cellini's religious phase deserves some special comment. It occurs so strangely in the midst of his most worldly life. Like love, he puts religion off and on quite easily, reverting to it when he finds himself in danger or bad spirits, and forgetting it again when he is happy. For instance, in the Castle of St. Angelo he made a vow to visit the Holy Sepulchre if God would grant him to behold the sun. This vow he forgot until he met with a disappointment in France, when he determined to forsake the Court and travel to Jerusalem. But the offer of a salary of seven hundred crowns

restored his spirits, and he thought no more about the Holy Sepulchre. Although he loved his life so dearly, yet he made a virtue of necessity as soon as he was threatened with death, crying, "The sooner I am delivered from the prison of this world the better, especially as I am sure of salvation, being unjustly put to death." His good opinion of himself extended to the certainty he felt of heaven. Forgetting his homicides and debaucheries, he had recourse to the thought of God, and sustained his courage with devotion when all other sources failed. About the powers of Providence his notions were confused. Whether the stars or divine Truth ruled the world, he could not clearly say. "The stars do not conspire to do us good or mischief, but to their conjunctions we are all of us subject. Although I have free will, and if my faith were as strong and lively as it ought to be, angels would be sent from heaven to deliver me; yet, as I am unworthy of this favour, the stars are permitted to shed their baleful influence on my devoted head." Again he says, "Now Truth has been too powerful for the malignant influence of the stars." There is the same confusion in his mind about the Pope. He goes to Clement submissively for absolution from homicide and theft, saying, "I am at the feet of your Holiness, who have the full power of absolving, and I request you to give me permission to confess and communicate, that I may *with your favour* be restored to the Divine grace." He also tells him that the sight of Christ's vicar, in whom there is an awful representation of the Divine power, affected him with awe, and made him tremble. Yet at another time he speaks of this same Clement being "transformed to a savage beast," and lavishes abuse on Paul the Third, "who neither believed in God, nor in any other article of religion." Indeed, the Italians of this age seem to have treated the Pope as negroes treat their fetish. If they had cause to dislike him, they beat and heaped insults on him, like those Florentine clergy who described the Pontiff as "*leno matris sue, adulterorum minister, diaboli vicarius*," and his spiritual offspring as "*simonia, luxus, homicidium, proditio, hæresis*." On the other hand, if he proved favourable to their interests, they turned round and worshipped him, and really thought that he could give them Heaven. We can judge how dangerous, in such a state of popular persuasion, was the teaching of Savonarola, who endeavoured to destroy the superstitions upon which alone the prestige of the Papal power reposed.

At the end of the year 1539 the Cardinal of Ferrara, one of the Este family, appeared in Rome with solicitations from Francis the First that the Pope would release Cellini, and allow him to enter his service. Upon this the prison door was opened. Our friend returned to his old mode of restless life, and travelled in the cardinal's train to France. We find him renewing his favourite pastimes—killing people, disputing with his employers, and working diligently at his trade. The first period of his history is closed, and the second begins.

Cellini's account of his residence in France has some historical interest. He does not seem to have understood the French, or to have liked them,

but complains that they were far less civilized than the Italians of his time. When he first joined the Court he found Francis travelling about with a retinue of 18,000 persons and 12,000 horse. Very often they lodged in places where no accommodation could be had, and wretched tents were rigged up for the suite. Francis among his ladies and his cardinals, pretending to a knowledge of the arts, sauntering with his splendid train into the goldsmith's workshop, encouraging Cellini's violence with a boyish love of mischief, vain and flattered, peevish, petulant, and fond of show, appears upon Cellini's pages with lifelike vividness. On establishing himself in Paris, the king presented him with a castle, called *Le Petit Neale*, and made him lord thereof by letters of naturalization. This castle stood where the Institute has since been built; we may judge of its extent from the number of occupations carried on within its precincts at the time when Cellini entered into possession. He found there a tennis-court, a distillery, a printing-press, and a manufactory of saltpetre, besides residents engaged in other trades. Cellini's claims were resisted. Probably its occupiers did not relish the intrusion of a foreigner. So he stormed the castle, and installed himself by force of arms. Nor could he keep possession without the same violence. But this Cellini loved, and had he been let alone he would have fallen ill of ennui. One of the previous residents in *Le Petit Neale* was a dependent of Madame d'Estampes; and, through the complaints which he carried to her ears, Cellini fell into disfavour with the mistress of the Queen. Proud, self-confident, overbearing, and unable to command his words or actions, Cellini could not pay his court to princes. He quarrelled with both Primaticcio and Rosso, who had previously been settled under the protection of Francis, rousing their deadly animosity by his manners of a bravo. After being attacked by assassins and robbers on more than one occasion, he found himself involved in two lawsuits, which eventually he overbore by dint of bawling in the courts, cutting the plaintiffs to pieces without killing them, and threatening the attorneys with his sword. He draws a graphic picture of the French law-courts, with their judge as grave as Plato, their barristers all chattering at once, their bought Norman witnesses, and the ushers at the doors who cried out "*Paix, paix, Satan, allez paix.*" In this exclamation Cellini thought he recognized the strange lines at the beginning of the seventh canto of Dante's *Inferno*. Notwithstanding these disturbances in his domestic life, Cellini began some great works for Francis, who valued him exceedingly, and would not listen to the account of his disorderly conduct. At Paris he employed him to make huge silver candelabra, and at Fontainebleau to restore the castle gate. Cellini, for the latter purpose, executed a figure of a nymph in bronze, reclining among trophies of the chase. This is preserved in the collection of the Louvre. It is a long-limbed, lifeless figure, absolutely without any meaning—a mere snuff-box ornament enlarged to a gigantic size. Francis, however, appears to have had very bad taste, and to have admired the meretricious designs of Cellini above measure. He wished to keep him near his person, but the animosity of Madame

d'Estampes and of his old patron the Cardinal of Ferrara grew so oppressive that Cellini resolved to return to Italy, leaving his effects behind him under the charge of Ascanio, his friend and pupil.

Cellini never returned to France. The third and last period of his life was spent at Florence in the service of Cosimo. This duke, with the best intentions, had not taste enough to patronize the arts wisely. He received Cellini with kindness, and entrusted him with the execution of a statue of Perseus for the great square of the Palazzo Pubblico. But he had no confidence in his own judgment, and was so deluded as to prefer Bandinelli, Cellini's bitter foe, and Ammanati, a very indifferent sculptor, to Benvenuto, who, with all his faults, was one of the royal race of Italian artists and no pretender. Besides, Cosimo entrusted all the details of his business to an ignorant steward called Francesco Ricci. Henceforward Cellini's time was greatly wasted in wrangling with this steward and with Bandinelli, and in endeavouring to overcome the coldness and to meet the vacillations of the duke. His autobiography presents a lamentable picture of the subservience of artists to the caprice of princes at this time. There was no popular patronage to which they could appeal. Fame and the means of subsistence were dispensed to them by popes and cardinals and dukes whom they had to cajole, in whose antechambers they passed valuable hours, whose servants and mistresses they bribed, and who would often cast them loose or throw them into prison for a whim. This atmosphere of intrigue and animosity was not uncongenial to Cellini, and the obstacles which he met at Florence roused his energy to such a height that he produced under great difficulties the noblest of his works. We must pass over in silence the details which he has recorded respecting the Perseus. Suffice it to say that Cellini achieved a triumph adequate to his own highest expectations, when the statue was at last uncovered. Odes and sonnets in Italian, Greek, and Latin were written in its praise. Pontormo and Bronzino, the painters, loaded it with eulogy. And Cellini, ruffling with hand on hilt in silks and satins through the square, was pointed out as the great sculptor who had cast the admirable bronze. This he thoroughly enjoyed, and when some Sicilian gentlemen came up to deliver him a set oration, "which would have been too great a panegyric even for a Pope, I behaved," he says, "as modestly as it was possible for me on the occasion; but they continued so long paying me compliments that I at last begged they would leave the square, because the populace crowded about to stare at me more than at my statue of Perseus." Indeed it was no slight distinction for a Florentine to erect a statue beneath the Loggia de Lanzi, in the square of the Signory. Orcagna had built the loggia long ago, near the palace of the people, with its mediæval battlements and narrow windows. Donatello had placed his "Judith," and Michael Angelo his "David," in the same square. Every great action in Florentine history had taken place within its precincts. Every name of distinction among the citizens of Florence was connected with its monuments. To this day we may read the course of Florentine art by studying the sculpture and the architecture of this square; and

not the least of its many ornaments is the *Perseus* of Cellini. Cellini completed his work in 1554. His autobiography is carried down to the year 1562, when it abruptly terminates. It appears that in 1558 he received the tonsure and the first ecclesiastical orders; but two years later on he married a wife, and died at the age of sixty-nine, leaving three legitimate children. His old age was passed in privacy at Florence, where the duke honoured him, and gave him a house near Santa Croce. He was buried splendidly in the chapter-house of the Nunziata, a funeral sermon being preached "in praise both of his life and works, and his excellent moral qualities." It would not appear from this statement, which we have quoted from a document written at the time, that his contemporaries regarded Cellini as an exceptionally wicked man.

It has not been our purpose to criticize Cellini's style of art, but rather to draw from his biography those passages which illustrate the temper of the man and the character of the times in which he lived. Yet if we turn for a moment to consider his works, we must admit that Cellini belongs to the second class of artists. He never rose above the affectations of his day, and followed rather than controlled its taste. His best productions were imitative of the style of Michael Angelo, whose genius he comprehended, and with the spirit of whose masterpieces he was thoroughly imbued. But, unfortunately, in his reproduction of the forms of Michael Angelo, he failed to represent the intellectual sublimity which makes us condone their exaggeration and mannerism. What Cellini did was absolutely without reflection or ideal unity. It does not appear from his memoirs that he ever thought his subjects out with difficulty, or even selected his models with care. He owed his success to fertility, technical skill, and passionate energy. His life was too noisy and disturbed; he thought too much about himself; he was too intent upon conceiving some new, tremendous, and startling effect, to produce a really concentrated work of art. In his day the study of great masters and antiquities had brought men to despair of originality in the highest branches of painting and sculpture. They were content with aiming at brilliancy, variety, and ornament. Cellini's trade of a goldsmith rendered him peculiarly liable to fall into this error. Accustomed to work on gold and silver plate, when he began a statue he simply enlarged the puppets of his urns and tankards. Omitting the thought and expression which should give life to sculpture, he lavished labour on mere decorative details. On this account his best works are even wrought and inharmonious. Yet even here Cellini did not fall below the standard of his day. For vigour of design, boldness of execution, and accuracy of hand he surpassed his contemporaries. The unmeaning groups of Primaticcio whom he studied at the Court of Francis, and the statues of Bandinelli whom he copied at Florence, cannot be compared with his productions for elegance and taste. We only remark that, being so great, he would not rise above the brilliancy of his time, the tramping associations of his adopted art, and the frivolity of his own nature. With him the lapse of Italian sculpture went on. He knew it, and his eyes were always fixed upon the past. As a man he excites more interest than as an artist.



PEDDLE AT FAULT.

Armada.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER III.

THE BRINK OF DISCOVERY.



THE morning of the interview between Mrs. Milroy and her daughter, at the cottage, was a morning of serious reflection for the squire, at the great house.

Even Allan's easy-tempered nature had not been proof against the disturbing influence exercised on it by the events of the last three days. Midwinter's abrupt departure had vexed him; and Major Milroy's reception of his inquiries relating to Miss Gwilt weighed unpleasantly on his mind. Since his visit to the cottage, he had felt impatient and ill at ease, for the first time in his life, with everybody who came near him. Impatient with Pedgift Junior, who had called on the previous evening, to announce his departure for London on business the next day, and to place his services at

the disposal of his client; ill at ease with Miss Gwilt, at a secret meeting with her in the park that morning; and ill at ease in his own company, as he now sat moodily smoking, in the solitude of his room. "I can't live this sort of life much longer," thought Allan. "If nobody will help me to put the awkward question to Miss Gwilt, I must stumble on some way of putting it for myself."

What way? The answer to that question was as hard to find as ever. Allan tried to stimulate his sluggish invention by walking up and down the room, and was disturbed by the appearance of the footman at the first turn.

"Now then! what is it?" he asked impatiently.

"A letter, sir; and the person waits for an answer."

Allan looked at the address. It was in a strange handwriting. He opened the letter; and a little note enclosed in it dropped to the ground. The note was directed, still in the strange handwriting, to "Mrs. Mandeville, 18, Kingsdown Crescent, Bayswater. Favoured by Mr. Armadale." More and more surprised, Allan turned for information to the signature at the end of the letter. It was "Anne Milroy."

"Anne Milroy?" he repeated. "It must be the major's wife. What can she possibly want with me?"

By way of discovering what she wanted, Allan did at last what he might more wisely have done at first. He sat down to read the letter.

["Private."]

"The Cottage, Monday.

"DEAR SIR,—The name at the end of these lines will, I fear, recall to you a very rude return made on my part, some time since, for an act of neighbourly kindness on yours. I can only say in excuse, that I am a great sufferer, and that if I was ill-tempered enough, in a moment of irritation under severe pain, to send back your present of fruit, I have regretted doing so ever since. Attribute this letter, if you please, to my desire to make you some atonement, and to my wish to be of service to our good friend and landlord if I possibly can.

"I have been informed of the question which you addressed to my husband the day before yesterday, on the subject of Miss Gwilt. From all I have heard of you, I am quite sure that your anxiety to know more of this charming person than you know now, is an anxiety proceeding from the most honourable motives. Believing this, I feel a woman's interest—incurable invalid as I am—in assisting you. If you are desirous of becoming acquainted with Miss Gwilt's family circumstances without directly appealing to Miss Gwilt herself, it rests with you to make the discovery—and I will tell you how.

"It so happens that some few days since, I wrote privately to Miss Gwilt's reference on this very subject. I had long observed that my governess was singularly reluctant to speak of her family and her friends; and without attributing her silence to other than perfectly proper motives, I felt it my duty to my daughter to make some inquiry on the subject. The answer that I have received is satisfactory as far as it goes. My correspondent informs me that Miss Gwilt's story is a very sad one, and that her own conduct throughout has been praiseworthy in the extreme. The circumstances (of a domestic nature, as I gather,) are all plainly stated in a collection of letters now in the possession of Miss Gwilt's reference. This lady is perfectly willing to let me see the letters—but, not possessing copies of them, and being personally responsible for their security, she is reluctant, if it can be avoided, to trust them to the post; and she begs me to wait until she or I can find some reliable person who can be employed to transmit the packet from her hands to mine.

"Under these circumstances, it has struck me that you might possibly, with your interest in the matter, be not unwilling to take charge of the papers. If I am wrong in this idea, and if you are not disposed, after what I have told you, to go to the trouble and expense of a journey to London, you have only to burn my letter and enclosure, and to think no more about it. If you decide on becoming my envoy, I gladly provide you with the necessary introduction to Mrs. Mandeville. You have only, on presenting it, to receive the letters in a sealed packet, to send them here on your return to Thorpe-Ambrose, and to wait an early communication from me acquainting you with the result.

"In conclusion, I have only to add that I see no impropriety in your taking (if you feel so inclined) the course that I propose to you. Miss Gwilt's manner of receiving such allusions as I have made to her family circumstances, has rendered it unpleasant for me (and would render it quite impossible for you) to seek information in the first instance from herself. I am certainly justified in applying to her reference; and you are certainly not to blame for being the medium of safely transmitting a sealed communication from one lady to another. If I find in that communication family secrets which cannot honourably be mentioned to any third person, I shall of course be obliged to keep you waiting until I have first appealed to Miss Gwilt. If I find nothing recorded but what is to her honour, and what is sure to raise her still higher in your estimation, I am undeniably doing her a service by taking you into my confidence. This is how I look at the matter—but pray don't allow me to influence you.

"In any case, I have one condition to make, which I am sure you will understand to be indispensable. The most innocent actions are liable, in this wicked world, to the worst possible interpretation. I must, therefore, request that you will consider this communication as *strictly private*. I write to you in a confidence which is on no account (until circumstances may, in my opinion, justify the revelation of it) to extend beyond our two selves.

"Believe me, dear sir, truly yours,

"ANNE MILROY."

In this tempting form the unscrupulous ingenuity of the major's wife had set the trap. Without a moment's hesitation, Allan followed his impulses as usual, and walked straight into it—writing his answer, and pursuing his own reflections simultaneously, in a highly characteristic state of mental confusion.

"By Jupiter, this is kind of Mrs. Milroy!" ("My dear madam.")
 "Just the thing I wanted, at the time when I needed it most!" ("I don't know how to express my sense of your kindness, except by saying that I will go to London and fetch the letters with the greatest pleasure.")
 "She shall have a basket of fruit regularly every day, all through the season." ("I will go at once, dear madam, and be back to-morrow.")
 "Ah, nothing like the women for helping one when one is in love! This

is just what my poor mother would have done in Mrs. Milroy's place." ("On my word of honour as a gentleman, I will take the utmost care of the letters—and keep the thing strictly private, as you request.") "I would have given five hundred pounds to anybody who would have put me up to the right way to speak to Miss Gwilt—and here is this blessed woman does it for nothing." ("Believe me, my dear madam, gratefully yours, Allan Armadale.")

Having sent his reply out to Mrs. Milroy's messenger, Allan paused in a momentary perplexity. He had an appointment with Miss Gwilt in the park for the next morning. It was absolutely necessary to let her know that he would be unable to keep it; she had forbidden him to write, and he had no chance that day of seeing her alone. In this difficulty, he determined to let the necessary intimation reach her through the medium of a message to the major, announcing his departure for London on business, and asking if he could be of service to any member of the family. Having thus removed the only obstacle to his departure, Allan consulted the timetable, and found, to his disappointment, that there was a good hour to spare before it would be necessary to drive to the railway-station. In his existing frame of mind, he would infinitely have preferred starting for London in a violent hurry.

When the time came at last, Allan, on passing the steward's office, drummed at the door, and called through it, to Mr. Bashwood, "I'm going to town—back to-morrow." There was no answer from within; and the servant interposing, informed his master that Mr. Bashwood, having no business to attend to that day, had locked up the office, and had left some hours since.

On reaching the station, the first person whom Allan encountered was Pedgift Junior, going to London on the legal business which he had mentioned on the previous evening, at the great house. The necessary explanations exchanged, it was decided that the two should travel in the same carriage. Allan was glad to have a companion; and Pedgift, enchanted as usual to make himself useful to his client, bustled away to get the tickets and see to the luggage. Sauntering to and fro on the platform until his faithful follower returned, Allan came suddenly upon no less a person than Mr. Bashwood himself—standing back in a corner with the guard of the train, and putting a letter (accompanied, to all appearance, by a fee) privately into the man's hand.

"Hullo!" cried Allan in his hearty way. "Something important there, Mr. Bashwood—eh?"

If Mr. Bashwood had been caught in the act of committing murder, he could hardly have shown greater alarm than he now testified at Allan's sudden discovery of him. Snatching off his dingy old hat, he bowed bareheaded, in a palsy of nervous trembling from head to foot. "No, sir, no, sir; only a little letter, a little letter, a little letter," said the deputy-steward, taking refuge in reiteration, and bowing himself swiftly backwards out of his employer's sight.

Allan turned carelessly on his heel. "I wish I could take to that fellow," he thought—"but I can't; he's such a sneak! What the deuce was there to tremble about? Does he think I want to pry into his secrets?"

Mr. Bashwood's secret on this occasion concerned Allan more nearly than Allan supposed. The letter which he had just placed in charge of the guard was nothing less than a word of warning addressed to Mrs. Oldershaw, and written by Miss Gwilt.

"If you can hurry your business" (wrote the major's governess) "do so, and come back to London immediately. Things are going wrong here, and Miss Milroy is at the bottom of the mischief. This morning she insisted on taking up her mother's breakfast, always on other occasions taken up by the nurse. They had a long confabulation in private; and half an hour later I saw the nurse slip out with a letter, and take the path that leads to the great house. The sending of the letter has been followed by young Armadale's sudden departure for London—in the face of an appointment which he had with me for to-morrow morning. This looks serious. The girl is evidently bold enough to make a fight of it for the position of Mrs. Armadale of Thorpe-Ambrose, and she has found out some way of getting her mother to help her. Don't suppose I am in the least nervous or discouraged; and don't do anything till you hear from me again. Only get back to London—for I may have serious need of your assistance in the course of the next day or two.

"I send this letter to town (to save a post) by the mid-day train, in charge of the guard. As you insist on knowing every step I take at Thorpe-Ambrose, I may as well tell you that my messenger (for I can't go to the station myself) is that curious old creature whom I mentioned to you in my first letter. Ever since that time, he has been perpetually hanging about here for a look at me. I am not sure whether I frighten him or fascinate him—perhaps I do both together. All you need care to know is, that I can trust him with my trifling errands, and possibly, as time goes on, with something more. L. G."

Meanwhile the train had started from the Thorpe-Ambrose station, and the squire and his travelling companion were on their way to London.

Some men, finding themselves in Allan's company under present circumstances, might have felt curious to know the nature of his business in the metropolis. Young Pedgift's unerring instinct as a man of the world penetrated the secret without the slightest difficulty. "The old story," thought this wary old head, wagging privately on its lusty young shoulders. "There's a woman in the case, as usual. Any other business would have been turned over to me." Perfectly satisfied with this conclusion, Mr. Pedgift the younger proceeded, with an eye to his professional interest, to make himself as agreeable to his client as usual. He seized on the whole administrative business of the journey to London, as he had seized on the whole administrative business of the picnic at the Broads. On reaching the terminus, Allan was ready to go to any hotel

that might be recommended. His invaluable solicitor straightway drove him to an hotel at which the Pedgift family had been accustomed to put up for three generations.

"You don't object to vegetables, sir?" said the cheerful Pedgift, as the cab stopped at an hotel in Covent Garden Market. "Very good, you may leave the rest to my grandfather, my father, and me. I don't know which of the three is most beloved and respected in this house. How-d'ye-do, William? (Our head-waiter, Mr. Armadale.) Is your wife's rheumatism better, and does the little boy get on nicely at school? Your master's out, is he? Never mind, you'll do. This, William, is Mr. Armadale of Thorpe-Ambrose. I have prevailed on Mr. Armadale to try our house. Have you got the bedroom I wrote for? Very good. Let Mr. Armadale have it, instead of me (my grandfather's favourite bedroom, sir; number five, on the second floor;) pray take it—I can sleep anywhere. Will you have the mattress on the top of the feather-bed? You hear, William? Tell Matilda, the mattress on the top of the feather-bed. How is Matilda? Has she got the tooth-ache, as usual? The head-chambermaid, Mr. Armadale, and a most extraordinary woman; she will *not* part with a hollow tooth in her lower jaw. My grandfather says, 'have it out'—my father says, 'have it out'—I say, 'have it out,' and Matilda turns a deaf ear to all three of us. Yes, William, yes; if Mr. Armadale approves, this sitting-room will do. About dinner, sir? You would prefer getting your business over first, and coming back to dinner? Shall we say, in that case, half-past seven? William, half-past seven. Not the least need to order anything, Mr. Armadale. The head-waiter has only to give my compliments to the cook, and the best dinner in London will be sent up, punctual to the minute, as a necessary consequence. Say Mr. Pedgift, junior, if you please, William—otherwise, sir, we might get my grandfather's dinner or my father's dinner, and they *might* turn out a little too heavy and old-fashioned in their way of feeding for you and me. As to the wine, William. At dinner, *my* champagne, and the sherry that my father thinks nasty. After dinner, the claret with the blue seal—the wine my innocent grandfather said wasn't worth sixpence a bottle. Ha! ha! poor old boy! You will send up the evening papers and the playbills, just as usual, and—that will do, I think, William, for the present. An invaluable servant, Mr. Armadale; they're all invaluable servants in this house. We may not be fashionable here, sir, but by the Lord Harry we are snug! A cab? you would like a cab? Don't stir! I've rung the bell twice—that means, Cab wanted in a hurry. Might I ask, Mr. Armadale, which way your business takes you? Towards Bayswater? Would you mind dropping me in the park? It's a habit of mine when I'm in London to air myself among the aristocracy. Yours truly, sir, has an eye for a fine woman and a fine horse; and when he's in Hyde Park he's quite in his native element." Thus the all-accomplished Pedgift ran on; and by these little arts did he recommend himself to the good opinion of his client.

When the dinner-hour united the travelling companions again in their sitting-room at the hotel, a far less acute observer than young Pedgift must have noticed the marked change that appeared in Allan's manner. He looked vexed and puzzled, and sat drumming with his fingers on the dining-table without uttering a word.

"I'm afraid something has happened to annoy you, sir, since we parted company in the Park?" said Pedgift Junior. "Excuse the question—I only ask it in case I can be of any use."

"Something that I never expected has happened," returned Allan; "I don't know what to make of it. I should like to have your opinion," he added, after a little hesitation; "that is to say, if you will excuse my not entering into any particulars?"

"Certainly!" assented young Pedgift. "Sketch it in outline, sir. The merest hint will do; I wasn't born yesterday. (Oh, these women!" thought the youthful philosopher, in parenthesis.)

"Well," began Allan, "you know what I said when we got to this hotel; I said I had a place to go to in Bayawater" (Pedgift mentally checked off the first point—Case in the suburbs, Bayawater); "and a person—that is to say—no—as I said before, a person to inquire after." (Pedgift checked off the next point:—Person in the case. She-person, or he-person? She-person unquestionably!) "Well, I went to the house, and when I asked for her—I mean the person—she—that is to say, the person—oh, confound it!" cried Allan, "I shall drive myself mad, and you too, if I try to tell my story in this roundabout way. Here it is in two words. I went to number eighteen Kingsdown Crescent, to see a lady named Mandeville; and when I asked for her, the servant said Mrs. Mandeville had gone away, without telling anybody where, and without even leaving an address at which letters could be sent to her. There! it's out at last, and what do you think of it now?"

"Tell me first, sir," said the wary Pedgift. "what inquiries you made, when you found this lady had vanished?"

"Inquiries?" repeated Allan, "I was utterly staggered; I didn't say anything. What inquiries ought I to have made?"

Pedgift Junior cleared his throat, and crossed his legs in a strictly professional manner.

"I have no wish, Mr. Armadale," he began, "to inquire into your business with Mrs. Mandeville——"

"No," interposed Allan, bluntly, "I hope you won't inquire into that. My business with Mrs. Mandeville must remain a secret."

"But," pursued Pedgift, laying down the law with the forefinger of one hand on the outstretched palm of the other, "I may, perhaps, be allowed to ask generally, whether your business with Mrs. Mandeville is of a nature to interest you in tracing her from Kingsdown Crescent to her present residence?"

"Certainly!" said Allan. "I have a very particular reason for wishing to see her."

"In that case, sir," returned Pedgift Junior, "there were two obvious questions which you ought to have asked, to begin with—namely, on what date Mrs. Mandeville left, and how she left. Having discovered this, you should have ascertained next, under what domestic circumstances she went away—whether there was a misunderstanding with anybody; say a difficulty about money-matters. Also, whether she went away alone, or with somebody else. Also, whether the house was her own, or whether she only lodged in it. Also, in the latter event——"

"Stop! stop! you're making my head swim," cried Allan. "I don't understand all these ins and outs—I'm not used to this sort of thing."

"I've been used to it myself from my childhood upwards, sir," remarked Pedgift. "And if I can be of any assistance, say the word."

"You're very kind," returned Allan. "If you could only help me to find Mrs. Mandeville; and if you wouldn't mind leaving the thing afterwards entirely in my hands——?"

"I'll leave it in your hands, sir, with all the pleasure in life," said Pedgift Junior. ("And I'll lay five to one," he added mentally, "when the time comes, you'll leave it in mine!") We'll go to Bayswater together, Mr. Armadale, to-morrow morning. In the meantime here's the soup. The case now before the court is—Pleasure *versus* Business. I don't know what you say, sir; I say, without a moment's hesitation, Verdict for the plaintiff. Let us gather our rosebuds while we may. Excuse my high spirits, Mr. Armadale. Though buried in the country, I was made for a London life; the very air of the metropolis intoxicates me." With that avowal the irresistible Pedgift placed a chair for his patron, and issued his orders cheerfully to his viceroy, the head-waiter. "Iced punch, William, after the soup. I answer for the punch, Mr. Armadale—it's made after a receipt of my great-uncle's. He kept a tavern, and founded the fortunes of the family. I don't mind telling you the Pedgifts have had a publican among them; there's no false pride about me. 'Worth makes the man (as Pope says), and want of it the fellow; the rest is all but leather and prunella.' I cultivate poetry as well as music, sir, in my leisure hours; in fact, I'm more or less on familiar terms with the whole of the nine Muses. Ah! here's the punch! The memory of my great-uncle, the publican, Mr. Armadale—drunk in solemn silence!"

Allan tried hard to emulate his companion's gaiety and good humour, but with very indifferent success. His visit to Kingsdown Crescent recurred ominously again and again to his memory, all through the dinner, and all through the public amusements to which he and his legal adviser repaired at a later hour of the evening. When Pedgift Junior put out his candle that night, he shook his wary head, and regretfully apostrophized "the women" for the second time.

By ten o'clock the next morning, the indefatigable Pedgift was on the scene of action. To Allan's great relief, he proposed making the necessary inquiries at Kingsdown Crescent, in his own person, while his patron waited near at hand, in the cab which had brought them from the hotel. After a

delay of little more than five minutes, he re-appeared, in full possession of all attainable particulars. His first proceeding was to request Allan to step out of the cab, and to pay the driver. Next, he politely offered his arm, and led the way round the corner of the crescent, across a square, and into a by-street, which was rendered exceptionally lively by the presence of the local cab-stand. Here he stopped, and asked jocosely, whether Mr. Armadale saw his way now, or whether it would be necessary to test his patience by making an explanation.

"See my way?" repeated Allan in bewilderment. "I see nothing but a cab-stand."

Pedgift Junior smiled compassionately, and entered on his explanation. It was a lodging-house at Kingsdown Crescent, he begged to state to begin with. He had insisted on seeing the landlady. A very nice person, with all the remains of having been a fine girl about fifty years ago; quite in Pedgift's style—if he had only been alive at the beginning of the present century—quite in Pedgift's style. But perhaps Mr. Armadale would prefer hearing about Mrs. Mandeville? Unfortunately, there was nothing to tell. There had been no quarrelling, and not a farthing left unpaid: the lodger had gone, and there wasn't an explanatory circumstance to lay hold of anywhere. It was either Mrs. Mandeville's way to vanish, or there was something under the rose, quite undiscoverable so far. Pedgift had got the date on which she left, and the time of day at which she left, and the means by which she left. The means might help to trace her. She had gone away in a cab which the servant had fetched from the nearest stand. The stand was now before their eyes; and the waterman was the first person to apply to—going to the waterman for information, being clearly (if Mr. Armadale would excuse the joke) going to the fountain-head. Treating the subject in this airy manner, and telling Allan that he would be back in a moment, Pedgift Junior sauntered down the street, and beckoned the waterman confidentially into the nearest public-house.

In a little while the two reappeared; the waterman taking Pedgift in succession to the first, third, fourth and sixth of the cabmen whose vehicles were on the stand. The longest conference was held with the sixth man; and it ended in the sudden approach of the sixth cab to the part of the street where Allan was waiting.

"Get in, sir," said Pedgift, opening the door, "I've found the man. He remembers the lady; and, though he has forgotten the name of the street, he believes he can find the place he drove her to when he once gets back into the neighbourhood. I am charmed to inform you, Mr. Armadale, that we are in luck's way so far. I asked the waterman to show me the regular men on the stand—and it turns out that one of the regular men drove Mrs. Mandeville. The waterman vouches for him; he's quite an anomaly—a respectable cabman; drives his own horse, and has never been in any trouble. These are the sort of men, sir, who sustain one's belief in human nature. I've had a look at our friend; and I agree with the waterman—I think we can depend on him."

The investigation required some exercise of patience at the outset. It was not till the cab had traversed the distance between Bayswater and Pimlico, that the driver began to slacken his pace and look about him. After once or twice retracing its course, the vehicle entered a quiet by-street, ending in a dead wall, with a door in it; and stopped at the last house on the left-hand side, the house next to the wall.

"Here it is, gentlemen," said the man, opening the cab-door.

Allan and Allan's adviser both got out, and both looked at the house, with the same feeling of instinctive distrust. Buildings have their physiognomy—especially buildings in great cities—and the face of this house was essentially furtive in its expression. The front windows were all shut, and the front blinds were all drawn down. It looked no larger than the other houses in the street, seen in front; but it ran back deceitfully, and gained its greater accommodation by means of its greater depth. It affected to be a shop on the ground-floor—but it exhibited absolutely nothing in the space that intervened between the window and an inner row of red curtains, which hid the interior entirely from view. At one side was the shop-door, having more red curtains behind the glazed part of it, and bearing a brass plate on the wooden part of it, inscribed with the name of "Oldershaw." On the other side was the private door, with a bell marked Professional; and another brass plate, indicating a medical occupant on this side of the house, for the name on it was "Doctor Downward." If ever brick and mortar spoke yet, the brick and mortar here said plainly, "We have got our secrets inside, and we mean to keep them."

"This can't be the place," said Allan; "there must be some mistake."

"You know best, sir," remarked Pedgift Junior, with his sardonic gravity. "You know Mrs. Mandeville's habits."

"I!" exclaimed Allan. "You may be surprised to hear it—but Mrs. Mandeville is a total stranger to me."

"I'm not in the least surprised to hear it, sir—the landlady at Kingsdown Crescent informed me that Mrs. Mandeville was an old woman. Suppose we inquire?" added the impenetrable Pedgift, looking at the red curtains in the shop-window with a strong suspicion that Mrs. Mandeville's granddaughter might possibly be behind them.

They tried the shop-door first. It was locked. They rang. A lean and yellow young woman, with a tattered French novel in her hand, opened it.

"Good morning, miss," said Pedgift. "Is Mrs. Mandeville at home?"

The yellow young woman stared at him in astonishment. "No person of that name is known here," she answered sharply, in a foreign accent.

"Perhaps they know her at the private door?" suggested Pedgift Junior.

"Perhaps they do," said the yellow young woman, and shut the door in his face.

"Rather a quick-tempered young person that, sir," said Pedgift. "I congratulate Mrs. Mandeville on not being acquainted with her." He

led the way, as he spoke, to Doctor Downward's side of the premises, and rang the bell.

The door was opened this time by a man in a shabby livery. He, too, stared when Mrs. Mandeville's name was mentioned; and he, too, knew of no such person in the house.

"Very odd," said Pedgift, appealing to Allan.

"What is odd?" asked a softly-stepping, softly-speaking gentleman in black, suddenly appearing on the threshold of the parlour-door.

Pedgift Junior politely explained the circumstances, and begged to know whether he had the pleasure of speaking to Doctor Downward.

The doctor bowed. If the expression may be pardoned, he was one of those carefully-constructed physicians, in whom the public—especially the female public—implicitly trust. He had the necessary bald head, the necessary double eyeglass, the necessary black clothes, and the necessary blandness of manner, all complete. His voice was soothing, his ways were deliberate, his smile was confidential. What particular branch of his profession Doctor Downward followed, was not indicated on his door-plate—but he had utterly mistaken his vocation, if he was not a ladies' medical man.

"Are you quite sure there is no mistake about the name?" asked the doctor, with a strong underlying anxiety in his manner. "I have known very serious inconvenience to arise sometimes from mistakes about names. No? There is really no mistake? In that case, gentlemen, I can only repeat what my servant has already told you. Don't apologize, pray. Good morning." The doctor withdrew as noiselessly as he had appeared; the man in the shabby livery silently opened the door; and Allan and his companion found themselves in the street again.

"Mr. Armadale," said Pedgift, "I don't know how you feel—I feel puzzled."

"That's awkward," returned Allan; "I was just going to ask you what we ought to do next."

"I don't like the look of the place, the look of the shopwoman, or the look of the doctor," pursued the other. "And yet I can't say I think they are deceiving us—I can't say I think they really do know Mrs. Mandeville's name."

The impressions of Pedgift Junior seldom misled him; and they had not misled him in this case. The caution which had dictated Mrs. Oldershaw's private removal from Bayswater, was the caution which frequently over-reaches itself. It had warned her to trust nobody at Pimlico with the secret of the name she had assumed as Miss Gwilt's reference; but it had entirely failed to prepare her for the emergency that had really happened. In a word, Mrs. Oldershaw had provided for everything, except for the one unimaginable contingency of an after-inquiry into the character of Miss Gwilt.

"We must do something," said Allan; "it seems useless to stop here."

Nobody had ever yet caught Pedgift Junior at the end of his resources ; and Allan failed to catch him at the end of them now. "I quite agree with you, sir," he said ; "we must do something. We'll cross-examine the cabman."

The cabman proved to be immovable. Charged with mistaking the place, he pointed to the empty shop-window. "I don't know what you may have seen, gentlemen," he remarked ; "but there's the only shop-window I ever saw with nothing at all inside it. *That* fixed the place in my mind at the time, and I know it again when I see it." Charged with mistaking the person, or the day, or the house at which he had taken the person up, the cabman proved to be still unassailable. The servant who fetched him was marked as a girl well known on the stand. The day was marked, as the unluckiest working day he had had since the first of the year ; and the lady was marked, as having had her money ready at the right moment (which not one elderly lady in a hundred usually had), and having paid him his fare on demand without disputing it (which not one elderly lady in a hundred usually did). "Take my number, gentlemen," concluded the cabman, "and pay me for my time ; and what I've said to you, I'll swear to anywhere."

Pedgift made a note in his pocket-book of the man's number. Having added to it the name of the street, and the names on the two brass plates, he quietly opened the cab-door. "We are quite in the dark, thus far," he said. "Suppose we grope our way back to the hotel ?"

He spoke and looked more seriously than usual. The mere fact of "Mrs. Mandeville's" having changed her lodging without telling any one where she was going, and without leaving any address at which letters could be forwarded to her—which the jealous malignity of Mrs. Milroy had interpreted as being undeniably suspicious in itself—had produced no great impression on the more impartial judgment of Allan's solicitor. People frequently left their lodgings in a private manner, with perfectly producible reasons for doing so. But the appearance of the place to which the cabman persisted in declaring that he had driven "Mrs. Mandeville," set the character and proceedings of that mysterious lady before Pedgift Junior in a new light. His personal interest in the inquiry suddenly strengthened, and he began to feel a curiosity to know the real nature of Allan's business which he had not felt yet.

"Our next move, Mr. Armadale, is not a very easy move to see," he said, as they drove back to the hotel. "Do you think you could put me in possession of any further particulars ?"

Allan hesitated ; and Pedgift Junior saw that he had advanced a little too far. "I mustn't force it," he thought ; "I must give it time, and let it come of its own accord." "In the absence of any other information, sir," he resumed, "what do you say, to my making some inquiry about that queer shop, and about those two names on the door-plate ? My business in London, when I leave you, is of a professional nature ; and I am going into the right quarter for getting information, if it is to be got."

"There can't be any harm, I suppose, in making inquiries," replied Allan.

He, too, spoke more seriously than usual; he, too, was beginning to feel an all-mastering-curiosity to know more. Some vague connection, not to be distinctly realized or traced out, began to establish itself in his mind between the difficulty of approaching Miss Gwilt's family circumstances, and the difficulty of approaching Miss Gwilt's reference. "I'll get down and walk, and leave you to go on to your business," he said. "I want to consider a little about this; and a walk and a cigar will help me."

"My business will be done, sir, between one and two," said Pedgift, when the cab had been stopped, and Allan had got out. "Shall we meet again at two o'clock, at the hotel?"

Allan nodded, and the cab drove off.

CHAPTER IV.

ALLAN AT BAY.

Two o'clock came; and Pedgift Junior, punctual to his time, came with it. His vivacity of the morning had all sparkled out; he greeted Allan with his customary politeness, but without his customary smile; and when the head waiter came in for orders, his dismissal was instantly pronounced in words never yet heard to issue from the lips of Pedgift in that hotel:—"Nothing at present."

"You seem to be in low spirits," said Allan. "Can't we get our information? Can nobody tell you anything about the house in Pimlico?"

"Three different people have told me about it, Mr. Armadale; and they have all three said the same thing."

Allan eagerly drew his chair nearer to the place occupied by his travelling companion. His reflections in the interval since they had last seen each other, had not tended to compose him. That strange connection, so easy to feel, so hard to trace, between the difficulty of approaching Miss Gwilt's family circumstances, and the difficulty of approaching Miss Gwilt's reference, which had already established itself in his thoughts, had by this time stealthily taken a firmer and firmer hold on his mind. Doubts troubled him which he could neither understand nor express. Curiosity filled him, which he half-longed and half-dreaded to satisfy.

"I am afraid I must trouble you with a question or two, sir, before I can come to the point," said Pedgift Junior. "I don't want to force myself into your confidence; I only want to see my way, in what looks to me like a very awkward business. Do you mind telling me whether others beside yourself are interested in this inquiry of ours?"

"Other people are interested in it," replied Allan. "There's no objection to telling you that."

"Is there any other person who is the object of the inquiry besides

Mrs. Mandeville herself?" pursued Pedgift, winding his way a little deeper into the secret.

"Yes; there is another person," said Allan, answering rather unwillingly.

"Is the person a young woman, Mr. Armadale?"

Allan started. "How do you come to guess that?" he began—then checked himself, when it was too late. "Don't ask me any more questions," he resumed. "I'm a bad hand at defending myself against a sharp fellow like you; and I'm bound in honour towards other people to keep the particulars of this business to myself."

Pedgift Junior had apparently heard enough for his purpose. He drew his chair, in his turn, nearer to Allan. He was evidently anxious and embarrassed—but his professional manner began to show itself again from sheer force of habit.

"I've done with my questions, sir," he said; "and I have something to say now, on my side. In my father's absence, perhaps you may be kindly disposed to consider me as your legal adviser. If you will take my advice, you will not stir another step in this inquiry."

"What do you mean?" interposed Allan.

"It is just possible, Mr. Armadale, that the cabman, positive as he is, may have been mistaken. I strongly recommend you to take it for granted that he is mistaken—and to drop it there."

The caution was kindly intended; but it came too late. Allan did what ninety-nine men out of a hundred in his position would have done—he declined to take his lawyer's advice.

"Very well, sir," said Pedgift Junior; "if you will have it, you must have it."

He leaned forward close to Allan's ear, and whispered what he had heard of the house in Pimlico, and of the people who occupied it.

"Don't blame me, Mr. Armadale," he added, when the irrevocable words had been spoken. "I tried to spare you."

Allan suffered the shock, as all great shocks are suffered, in silence. His first impulse would have driven him headlong for refuge to that very view of the cabman's assertion which had just been recommended to him, but for one damning circumstance which placed itself inexorably in his way. Miss Gwilt's marked reluctance to approach the story of her past life, rose irrepressibly on his memory, in indirect but horrible confirmation of the evidence which connected Miss Gwilt's reference with the house in Pimlico. One conclusion, and one only—the conclusion which any man must have drawn, hearing what he had just heard, and knowing no more than he knew—forced itself into his mind. A miserable, fallen woman, who had abandoned herself in her extremity to the help of wretches skilled in criminal concealment—who had stolen her way back to decent society and a reputable employment, by means of a false character—and whose position now imposed on her the dreadful necessity of perpetual secrecy and perpetual deceit in relation to her past life—

such was the aspect in which the beautiful governess at Thorpe-Ambrose now stood revealed to Allan's eyes !

Falsely revealed, or truly revealed ? Had she stolen her way back to decent society, and a reputable employment, by means of a false character ? She had. Did her position impose on her the dreadful necessity of perpetual secrecy and perpetual deceit, in relation to her past life ? It did. Was she some such pitiable victim to the treachery of a man unknown as Allan had supposed ? *She was no such pitiable victim.* The conclusion which Allan had drawn—the conclusion literally forced into his mind by the facts before him—was, nevertheless, the conclusion of all others that was farthest even from touching on the truth. The true story of Miss Gwilt's connection with the house in Pimlico and the people who inhabited it—a house rightly described as filled with wicked secrets, and people rightly represented as perpetually in danger of feeling the grasp of the law—was a story which coming events were yet to disclose : a story infinitely less revolting, and yet infinitely more terrible, than Allan or Allan's companion had either of them supposed.

"I tried to spare you, Mr. Armadale," repeated Pedgift. "I was anxious, if I could possibly avoid it, not to distress you."

Allan looked up, and made an effort to control himself. "You have distressed me dreadfully," he said. "You have quite crushed me down. But it is not your fault. I ought to feel you have done me a service—and what I ought to do I will do, when I am my own man again. There is one thing," Allan added, after a moment's painful consideration, "which ought to be understood between us at once. The advice you offered me just now was very kindly meant, and it was the best advice that could be given. I will take it gratefully. We will never talk of this again, if you please ; and I beg and entreat you will never speak about it to any other person. Will you promise me that ?"

Pedgift gave the promise with very evident sincerity, but without his professional confidence of manner. The distress in Allan's face seemed to daunt him. After a moment of very uncharacteristic hesitation, he considerately quitted the room.

Left by himself, Allan rang for writing materials, and took out of his pocket-book the fatal letter of introduction to "Mrs. Mandeville," which he had received from the major's wife.

A man accustomed to consider consequences and to prepare himself for action by previous thought would, in Allan's present circumstances, have felt some difficulty as to the course which it might now be least embarrassing and least dangerous to pursue. Accustomed to let his impulses direct him on all other occasions, Allan acted on impulse in the serious emergency that now confronted him. Though his attachment to Miss Gwilt was nothing like the deeply-rooted feeling which he had himself honestly believed it to be, she had taken no common place in his admiration, and she filled him with no common grief when he thought of her now. His one dominant desire, at that critical moment in his life, was a man's

merciful desire to protect from exposure and ruin the unhappy woman who had lost her place in his estimation, without losing her claim to the forbearance that could spare and to the compassion that could shield her. "I can't go back to Thorpe-Ambrose; I can't trust myself to speak to her, or to see her again. But I can keep her miserable secret—and I will!" With that thought in his heart, Allan set himself to perform the first and foremost duty which now claimed him—the duty of communicating with Mrs. Milroy. If he had possessed a higher mental capacity and a clearer mental view, he might have found the letter no easy one to write. As it was, he calculated no consequences, and felt no difficulty. His instinct warned him to withdraw at once from the position in which he now stood towards the major's wife, and he wrote what his instinct counselled him to write under those circumstances, as rapidly as the pen could travel over the paper:—

"Dunn's Hotel, Covent Garden, Tuesday.

"DEAR MADAM,—Pray excuse my not returning to Thorpe-Ambrose to-day, as I said I would. Unforeseen circumstances oblige me to stop in London. I am sorry to say I have not succeeded in seeing Mrs. Mandeville, for which reason I cannot perform your errand; and I beg, therefore, with many apologies, to return the letter of introduction. I hope you will allow me to conclude by saying that I am very much obliged to you for your kindness, and that I will not venture to trespass on it any further.

"I remain, dear madam, yours truly,

"ALLAN ARMADALE."

In those artless words, still entirely unsuspecting of the character of the woman he had to deal with, Allan put the weapon she wanted into Mrs. Milroy's hands.

The letter and its enclosure once sealed up, and addressed, he was free to think of himself and his future. As he sat idly drawing lines with his pen on the blotting-paper, the tears came into his eyes for the first time—tears in which the woman who had deceived him had no share. His heart had gone back to his dead mother. "If she had been alive," he thought, "I might have trusted *her*, and she would have comforted me." It was useless to dwell on it—he dashed away the tears, and turned his thoughts with the heart-sick resignation that we all know, to living and present things.

He wrote a line to Mr. Bashwood, briefly informing the deputy-steward that his absence from Thorpe-Ambrose was likely to be prolonged for some little time, and that any further instructions which might be necessary, under those circumstances, would reach him through Mr. Pedgift the elder. This done, and the letters sent to the post, his thoughts were forced back once more on himself. Again the blank future waited before him* to be filled up; and again his heart shrank from it to the refuge of the past.

This time, other images than the image of his mother filled his mind. The one all-absorbing interest of his earlier days stirred living and eager

in him again. He thought of the sea; he thought of his yacht lying idle in the fishing harbour at his West-country home. The old longing got possession of him to hear the wash of the waves; to see the filling of the sails; to feel the vessel that his own hands had helped to build, bounding under him once more. He rose in his impetuous way, to call for the time-table, and to start for Somersetshire by the first train—when the dread of the questions which Mr. Brock might ask, the suspicion of the change which Mr. Brock might see in him, drew him back to his chair. "I'll write," he thought, "to have the yacht rigged and refitted, and I'll wait to go to Somersetshire myself till Midwinter can go with me." He sighed as his memory reverted to his absent friend. Never had he felt the void made in his life by Midwinter's departure so painfully as he felt it now, in the dreariest of all social solitudes—the solitude of a stranger in London, left by himself at an hotel.

Before long, Pedgift Junior looked in, with an apology for his intrusion. Allan felt too lonely and too friendless not to welcome his companion's re-appearance gratefully. "I'm not going back to Thorpe-Ambrose," he said: "I'm going to stay a little while in London. I hope you will be able to stay with me?" To do him justice, Pedgift was touched, by the solitary position in which the owner of the great Thorpe-Ambrose estate now appeared before him. He had never, in his relations with Allan, so entirely forgotten his business-interests as he forgot them now.

"You are quite right, sir, to stop here—London's the place to divert your mind," said Pedgift cheerfully. "All business is more or less elastic in its nature, Mr. Armadale; I'll spin *my* business out, and keep you company with the greatest pleasure. We are both of us on the right side of thirty, sir—let's enjoy ourselves. What do you say to dining early, and going to the play, and trying the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park to-morrow morning, after breakfast? If we only live like fighting-cocks, and go in perpetually for public amusements, we shall arrive in no time at the *mens sana in corpore sano* of the ancients. Don't be alarmed at the quotation, sir. I dabble a little in Latin after business hours, and enlarge my sympathies by occasional perusal of the Pagan writers, assisted by a crib. William, dinner at five; and, as it's particularly important to-day, I'll see the cook myself."

The evening passed—the next day passed—Thursday morning came, and brought with it a letter for Allan. The direction was in Mrs. Milroy's handwriting; and the form of address adopted in the letter warned Allan the moment he opened it that something had gone wrong.

["Private."]

"The Cottage, Thorpe-Ambrose, Wednesday.

"SIR,—I have just received your mysterious letter. It has more than surprised, it has really alarmed me. After having made the friendliest advances to you on my side, I find myself suddenly shut out from your confidence in the most unintelligible, and, I must add, the most discourteous manner. It is quite impossible that I can allow the matter to rest where

you have left it. The only conclusion I can draw from your letter is, that my confidence must have been abused in some way, and that you know a great deal more than you are willing to tell me. Speaking in the interest of my daughter's welfare, I request that you will inform me what the circumstances are which have prevented your seeing Mrs. Mandeville, and which have led to the withdrawal of the assistance that you unconditionally promised me in your letter of Monday last.

"In my state of health, I cannot involve myself in a lengthened correspondence. I must endeavour to anticipate any objections you may make, and I must say all that I have to say in my present letter. In the event (which I am most unwilling to consider possible) of your declining to accede to the request that I have just addressed to you, I beg to say that I shall consider it my duty to my daughter to have this very unpleasant matter cleared up. If I don't hear from you to my full satisfaction by return of post, I shall be obliged to tell my husband that circumstances have happened which justify us in immediately testing the respectability of Miss Gwilt's reference. And when he asks me for my authority, I will refer him to you.

"Your obedient servant,

"ANNE MILROY."

In those terms the major's wife threw off the mask, and left her victim to survey at his leisure the trap in which she had caught him. Allan's belief in Mrs. Milroy's good faith had been so implicitly sincere, that her letter simply bewildered him. He saw vaguely that he had been deceived in some way, and that Mrs. Milroy's neighbourly interest in him was not what it had looked on the surface; and he saw no more. The threat of appealing to the major—on which, with a woman's ignorance of the natures of men, Mrs. Milroy had relied for producing its effect—was the only part of the letter to which Allan reverted with any satisfaction: it relieved instead of alarming him. "If there is to be a quarrel," he thought, "it will be a comfort, at any rate, to have it out with a man."

Firm in his resolution to shield the unhappy woman whose secret he wrongly believed himself to have surprised, Allan sat down to write his apologies to the major's wife. After setting up three polite declarations, in close marching order, he retired from the field. "He was extremely sorry to have offended Mrs. Milroy. He was innocent of all intention to offend Mrs. Milroy. And he begged to remain Mrs. Milroy's truly." Never had Allan's habitual brevity as a letter-writer done him better service than it did him now. With a little more skilfulness in the use of his pen, he might have given his enemy even a stronger hold on him than the hold she had got already.

The interval-day passed, and with the next morning's post Mrs. Milroy's threat came realized in the shape of a letter from her husband. The major wrote less formally than his wife had written, but his questions were mercilessly to the point.

["Private."]

"The Cottage, Thorpe-Ambrose,

"Friday, July 11th, 1851.

"DEAR SIR,—When you did me the favour of calling here a few days since, you asked a question relating to my governess, Miss Gwilt, which I thought rather a strange one at the time, and which caused, as you may remember, a momentary embarrassment between us.

"This morning, the subject of Miss Gwilt has been brought to my notice again in a manner which has caused me the utmost astonishment. In plain words, Mrs. Milroy has informed me that Miss Gwilt has exposed herself to the suspicion of having deceived us by a false reference. On my expressing the surprise which such an extraordinary statement caused me, and requesting that it might be instantly substantiated, I was still further astonished by being told to apply for all particulars to no less a person than Mr. Armadale. I have vainly requested some further explanation from Mrs. Milroy; she persists in maintaining silence, and in referring me to yourself.

"Under these extraordinary circumstances I am compelled, in justice to all parties, to ask you certain questions, which I will endeavour to put as plainly as possible, and which I am quite ready to believe (from my previous experience of you) that you will answer frankly on your side.

"I beg to inquire in the first place, whether you admit or deny Mrs. Milroy's assertion that you have made yourself acquainted with particulars relating either to Miss Gwilt or to Miss Gwilt's reference, of which I am entirely ignorant? In the second place, if you admit the truth of Mrs. Milroy's statement, I request to know how you became acquainted with those particulars? Thirdly, and lastly, I beg to ask you what the particulars are?

"If any special justification for putting these questions be needed—which, purely as a matter of courtesy towards yourself, I am willing to admit—I beg to remind you that the most precious charge in my house, the charge of my daughter, is confided to Miss Gwilt; and that Mrs. Milroy's statement places you, to all appearance, in the position of being competent to tell me whether that charge is properly bestowed or not.

"I have only to add that, as nothing has thus far occurred to justify me in entertaining the slightest suspicion either of my governess or her reference, I shall wait before I make any appeal to Miss Gwilt until I have received your answer—which I shall expect by return of post.

"Believe me, dear sir, faithfully yours,

"DAVID MILROY."

This transparently straightforward letter at once dissipated the confusion which had thus far existed in Allan's mind: he saw the snare in which he had been caught, as he had not seen it yet. Mrs. Milroy had clearly placed him between two alternatives—the alternative of putting himself in the wrong, by declining to answer her husband's questions; or the alternative of meanly sheltering his responsibility behind the responsibility of

a woman, by acknowledging to the major's own face that the major's wife had deceived him. In this difficulty Allan acted, as usual, without hesitation. His pledge to Mrs. Milroy to consider their correspondence private still bound him, disgracefully as she had abused it. And his resolution was as immovable as ever to let no earthly consideration tempt him into betraying Miss Gwilt. "I may have behaved like a fool," he thought, "but I won't break my word; and I won't be the means of turning that miserable woman adrift in the world again."

He wrote to the major as artlessly and briefly as he had written to the major's wife. He declared his unwillingness to cause a friend and neighbour any disappointment, if he could possibly help it. On this occasion he had no other choice. The questions the major asked him were questions which he could not consent to answer. He was not very clever at explaining himself, and he hoped he might be excused for putting it in that way, and saying no more.

Monday's post brought with it Major Milroy's rejoinder, and closed the correspondence.

"The Cottage, Thorpe-Ambrose, Sunday.

"SIR,—Your refusal to answer my questions, unaccompanied as it is by even the shadow of an excuse for such a proceeding, can be interpreted but in one way. Besides being an implied acknowledgment of the correctness of Mrs. Milroy's statement, it is also an implied reflection on my governess's character. As an act of justice towards a lady who lives under the protection of my roof, and who has given me no reason whatever to distrust her, I shall now show our correspondence to Miss Gwilt: and I shall repeat to her the conversation which I had with Mrs. Milroy on this subject, in Mrs. Milroy's presence.

"One word more respecting the future relations between us, and I have done. My ideas on certain subjects are, I daresay, the ideas of an old-fashioned man. In my time, we had a code of honour by which we regulated our actions. According to that code, if a man made private inquiries into a lady's affairs, without being either her husband, her father, or her brother, he subjected himself to the responsibility of justifying his conduct in the estimation of others; and if he evaded that responsibility, he abdicated the position of a gentleman. It is quite possible that this antiquated way of thinking exists no longer; but it is too late for me, at my time of life, to adopt more modern views. I am scrupulously anxious, seeing that we live in a country and a time in which the only court of honour is a police-court, to express myself with the utmost moderation of language upon this the last occasion that I shall have to communicate with you. Allow me, therefore, merely to remark, that our ideas of the conduct which is becoming in a gentleman, differ seriously; and permit me on this account to request that you will consider yourself for the future as a stranger to my family and to myself.

"Your obedient servant,

"DAVID MURDER."

The Monday morning on which his client received the major's letter, was the blackest Monday that had yet been marked in Pedgift's calendar. When Allan's first angry sense of the tone of contempt in which his friend and neighbour pronounced sentence on him had subsided, it left him sunk in a state of depression from which no efforts made by his travelling companion could rouse him for the rest of the day. Reverting naturally, now that his sentence of banishment had been pronounced, to his early intercourse with the cottage, his memory went back to Nellie, more regretfully and more penitently than it had gone back to her yet. "If *she* had shut the door on me, instead of her father," was the bitter reflection with which Allan now reviewed the past, "I shouldn't have had a word to say against it; I should have felt it served me right."

The next day brought another letter—a welcome letter this time, from Mr. Brock. Allan had written to Somersetshire on the subject of refitting the yacht some days since. The letter had found the rector engaged, as he innocently supposed, in protecting his old pupil against the woman whom he had watched in London, and whom he now believed to have followed him back to his own home. Acting under the directions sent to her, Mrs. Oldershaw's housemaid had completed the 'mystification' of Mr. Brock. She had tranquillized all further anxiety on the rector's part, by giving him a written undertaking (in the character of Miss Gwilt), engaging never to approach Mr. Armadale, either personally or by letter! Firmly persuaded that he had won the victory at last, poor Mr. Brock answered Allan's note in the highest spirits, expressing some natural surprise at his leaving Thorpe-Ambrose, but readily promising that the yacht should be refitted, and offering the hospitality of the rectory in the heartiest manner.

This letter did wonders in raising Allan's spirits. It gave him a new interest to look to, entirely disassociated from his past life in Norfolk. He began to count the days that were still to pass before the return of his absent friend. It was then Tuesday. If Midwinter came back from his walking-trip, as he had engaged to come back, in a fortnight, Saturday would find him at Thorpe-Ambrose. A note sent to meet the traveller might bring him to London the same night; and, if all went well, before another week was over, they might be afloat together in the yacht.

The next day passed, to Allan's relief, without bringing any letters. The spirits of Pedgift rose sympathetically with the spirits of his client. Towards dinner-time he reverted to the *mens sana in corpore sano* of the ancients, and issued his orders to the head-waiter more royally than ever.

Thursday came, and brought the fatal postman with more news from Norfolk. A letter-writer now stepped on the scene who had not appeared there yet; and the total overthrow of Allan's plans for a visit to Somersetshire was accomplished on the spot.

Pedgift Junior happened that morning to be first at the breakfast-table. When Allan came in, he relapsed into his professional manner, and offered a letter to his patron with a bow performed in dreary silence.

"For me?" inquired Allan, shrinking instinctively from a new correspondent.

"For you, sir—from my father," replied Pedgift, "enclosed in one to myself. Perhaps you will allow me to suggest, by way of preparing you for—for something a little unpleasant,—that we shall want a particularly good dinner to-day;—and (if they're not performing any modern German music to-night,) I think we should do well to finish the evening melodiously at the Opera."

"Something wrong at Thorpe-Ambrose?" asked Allan.

"Yes, Mr. Armadale; something wrong at Thorpe-Ambrose."

Allan sat down resignedly, and opened the letter.

"High Street, Thorpe-Ambrose,

"17th July, 1851.

"[Private and confidential.]"

"DEAR SIR—I cannot reconcile it with my sense of duty to your interests, to leave you any longer in ignorance of reports current in this town and its neighbourhood, which, I regret to say, are reports affecting yourself.

"The first intimation of anything unpleasant reached me on Monday last. It was widely rumoured in the town that something had gone wrong at Major Milroy's with the new governess, and that Mr. Armadale was mixed up in it. I paid no heed to this, believing it to be one of the many trumpery pieces of scandal perpetually set going here; and as necessary as the air they breathe, to the comfort of the inhabitants of this highly respectable place.

"Tuesday, however, put the matter in a new light. The most interesting particulars were circulated on the highest authority. On Wednesday, the gentry in the neighbourhood took the matter up, and universally sanctioned the view adopted by the town. To-day, the public feeling has reached its climax, and I find myself under the necessity of making you acquainted with what has happened.

"To begin at the beginning. It is asserted that a correspondence took place last week between Major Milroy and yourself; in which you cast a very serious suspicion on Miss Gwilt's respectability, without desisting your accusation, and without (on being applied to) producing your proofs. Upon this, the major appears to have felt it his duty (while assuring his governess of his own firm belief in her respectability) to inform her of what had happened, in order that she might have no future reason to complain of his having had any concealments from her in a matter affecting her character. Very magnanimous on the major's part; but you will see directly that Miss Gwilt was more magnanimous still. After expressing her thanks in a most becoming manner, she requested permission to withdraw herself from Major Milroy's service.

"Various reports are in circulation as to the governess's reason for taking this step.

"The authorized version (as sanctioned by the resident gentry) represents Miss Gwilt to have said that she could not condescend—in

justice to herself, and in justice to her highly respectable reference—to defend her reputation against undefined imputations cast on it by a comparative stranger. At the same time it was impossible for her to pursue such a course of conduct as this, unless she possessed a freedom of action which was quite incompatible with her continuing to occupy the dependent position of a governess. For that reason she felt it incumbent on her to leave her situation. But while doing this, she was equally determined not to lead to any mis-interpretation of her motives, by leaving the neighbourhood. No matter at what inconvenience to herself, she would remain long enough at Thorpe-Ambrose to await any more definitely-expressed imputations that might be made on her character, and to repel them publicly the instant they assumed a tangible form.

"Such is the position which this high-minded lady has taken up, with an excellent effect on the public mind in these parts. It is clearly her interest, for some reason, to leave her situation, without leaving the neighbourhood. On Monday last she established herself in a cheap lodging on the outskirts of the town. And on the same day, she probably wrote to her reference, for yesterday there came a letter from that lady to Major Milroy, full of virtuous indignation, and courting the fullest inquiry. The letter has been shown publicly, and has immensely strengthened Miss Gwilt's position. She is now considered to be quite a heroine. The *Thorpe-Ambrose Mercury* has got a leading article about her, comparing her to Joan of Arc. It is considered probable that she will be referred to in the sermon next Sunday. We reckon five strong-minded single ladies in this neighbourhood—and all five have called on her. A testimonial was suggested; but it has been given up at Miss Gwilt's own request, and a general movement is now on foot to get her employment as a teacher of music. Lastly, I have had the honour of a visit from the lady herself, in her capacity of martyr, to tell me, in the sweetest manner, that she doesn't blame Mr. Armadale; and that she considers him to be an innocent instrument in the hands of other and more designing people. I was carefully on my guard with her; for I don't altogether believe in Miss Gwilt, and I have my lawyer's suspicions of the motive that is at the bottom of her present proceedings.

"I have written thus far, my dear sir, with little hesitation or embarrassment. But there is unfortunately a serious side to this business as well as a ridiculous side; and I must unwillingly come to it before I close my letter.

"It is, I think, quite impossible that you can permit yourself to be spoken of as you are spoken of now, without stirring personally in the matter. You have unluckily made many enemies here, and foremost among them is my colleague, Mr. Darch. He has been showing everywhere a somewhat rashly-expressed letter you wrote to him, on the subject of letting the cottage to Major Milroy instead of to himself; and it has helped to exasperate the feeling against you. It is roughly stated in so many words, that you have been prying into Miss Gwilt's family affairs,

with the most dishonourable motives ; that you have tried, for a profligate purpose of your own, to damage her reputation, and to deprive her of the protection of Major Milroy's roof ; and that, after having been asked to substantiate by proof the suspicions that you have cast on the reputation of a defenceless woman, you have maintained a silence which condemns you in the estimation of all honourable men.

" I hope it is quite unnecessary for me to say that I don't attach the smallest particle of credit to these infamous reports. But they are too widely spread and too widely believed to be treated with contempt. I strongly urge you to return at once to this place, and to take the necessary measures for defending your character, in concert with me, as your legal adviser. I have formed, since my interview with Miss Gwilt, a very strong opinion of my own on the subject of that lady, which it is not necessary to commit to paper. Suffice it to say here, that I shall have a means to propose to you for silencing the slanderous tongues of your neighbours, on the success of which I stake my professional reputation, if you will only back me by your presence and authority.

" It may, perhaps, help to show you the necessity there is for your return, if I mention one other assertion respecting yourself, which is in everybody's mouth. Your absence is, I blush to tell you, attributed to the meanest of all motives. It is said that you are remaining in London because you are afraid to show your face at Thorpe-Ambrose.

" Believe me, dear sir, your faithful servant,

" A. PEDGIFT Senr."

Allan was of an age to feel the sting contained in the last sentence of his lawyer's letter. He started to his feet in a paroxysm of indignation, which revealed his character to Pedgift Junior in an entirely new light.

" Where's the time-table ? " cried Allan. " I must go back to Thorpe-Ambrose by the next train ! If it doesn't start directly, I'll have a special engine. I must and will go back instantly, and I don't care two straws for the expense ! "

" Suppose we telegraph to my father, sir ? " suggested the judicious Pedgift. " It's the quickest way of expressing your feelings, and the cheapest. "

" So it is, " said Allan. " Thank you for reminding me of it. Telegraph to them ! Tell your father to give every man in Thorpe-Ambrose the lie direct, in my name. Put it in capital letters, Pedgift—put it in capital letters ! "

Pedgift smiled and shook his head. If he was acquainted with no other variety of human nature, he thoroughly knew the variety that exists in country towns.

" It won't have the least effect on them, Mr. Armadale, " he remarked quietly. " They'll only go on lying harder than ever. If you want to upset the whole town, one line will do it. With five shilling's worth of human labour and electric fluid, 'sir (I dabble a little in science after

business hours), we'll explode a bombshell in Thorpe-Ambrose!" He produced the bombshell on a slip of paper as he spoke:—"A. Pedgift Junior, to A. Pedgift Senior.—Spread it all over the place that Mr. Armadale is coming down by the next train."

"More words," suggested Allan, looking over his shoulder. "Make it stronger."

"Leave my father to make it stronger, sir," returned the judicious Pedgift. "My father is on the spot—and his command of language is something quite extraordinary." He rang the bell, and despatched the telegram.

Now that something had been done, Allan subsided gradually into a state of composure. He looked back again at Mr. Pedgift's letter, and then handed it to Mr. Pedgift's son.

"Can you guess your father's plan for setting me right in the neighbourhood?" he asked.

Pedgift the younger shook his wise head. "His plan appears to be connected in some way, sir, with his opinion of Miss Gwilt."

"I wonder what he thinks of her?" said Allan.

"I shouldn't be surprised, Mr. Armadale," returned Pedgift Junior, "if his opinion staggers you a little, when you come to hear it. My father has had a large legal experience of the shady side of the sex—and he learnt his profession at the Old Bailey."

Allan made no further inquiries. He seemed to shrink from pursuing the subject, after having started it himself. "Let's be doing something to kill the time," he said. "Let's pack up, and pay the bill."

They packed up, and paid the bill. The hour came, and the train left for Norfolk at last.

While the travellers were on their way back, a somewhat longer telegraphic message than Allan's was flashing its way past them along the wires, in the reverse direction—from Thorpe-Ambrose to London. The message was in cypher, and the signs being interpreted, it ran thus:—

"From Lydia Gwilt to Maria Oldershaw—Good news! He is coming back. I mean to have an interview with him. Everything looks well. Now I have left the cottage, I have no women's prying eyes to dread, and I can come and go as I please. Mr. Midwinter is luckily out of the way. I don't despair of becoming Mrs. Armadale yet. Whatever happens, depend on my keeping away from London, until I am certain of not taking any spies after me to your place. I am in no hurry to leave Thorpe-Ambrose. I mean to be even with Miss Milroy first."

Shortly after that message was received in London, Allan was back again in his own house. It was evening—Pedgift Junior had just left him—and Pedgift Senior was expected to call on business in half an hour's time.

Harvest.

Of all the daughters of the year, as Mr. Tennyson so prettily designates the months—albeit they are of the masculine gender—August combines within itself the greatest number of attractions. There is a fresh, green innocence about May which is very charming so long as she continues to smile upon you; but as soon as you begin to think that she is likely to be all sunshine, she takes care to rebuke your presumption by a sudden blast of east wind, or a storm of driving hail. June is less capricious; but June, too, with all her rich beauty, has her fits of frost and cold. But towards the middle of July, or the beginning of August, summer, so to speak, begins to know its own mind; and then, if the season is a fine one, you come at last to taste its full warmth and beauty without any feeling of insecurity. The last waggon-loads of hay will just be winding homeward through the lanes, under the shadow of the stately elms, and the first shade of yellow will be colouring the surface of the wheat-fields, as we look down upon some central English landscape on the fateful day of St. Swithin. The corn-harvest, however, is always associated with autumn, although the autumn quarter rarely begins until all the corn, south at least of the Trent, is carried; and in this sense autumn has this year trodden more sharply on the heels of summer than we can ever recollect it to have done. But the result has been a richer combination of the elements of rural beauty than is usual at this season of the year. The exquisite green of the new-mown meadows, more brilliant this July than ever, was not kept waiting till its first freshness had gone off, for that beautiful contrast with the gold upon the hill-side which every lover of Nature knows and prizes so dearly. The yellow hair and the emerald girdle stood revealed together; and a more radiant and lovely specimen of an English summer than we experienced this year, from the middle of July to the beginning of the second week in August, is in all probability not within the memory of man.

The harvest has, we say, been unusually early; and we have now before us, as we write these words, all its busy and jocund life, all its wealth of colour, and picturesqueness of incident, thrown, as it were, into the very lap of summer, before a single blade of grass has withered, or a single leaf begun to fade. It is certainly the most cheerful period of the rural year. The hay harvest is a cheerful time, too, but it is not half so long; and it is out of the corn-gathering that the labourer makes his annual coup, in the shape of wages, which sets him on his legs again—as far, poor fellow, as he can ever be said to be on his legs at all—for the ensuing year. Few sights are more pleasing and exhilarating than

the groups of reapers and mowers who are now to be met with in all the lanes and roads around a country village, just as the light fades into darkness, or gives way before the clear and mellowed lustre of the harvest-moon, returning merrily, if wearily home, after their long day's work. Their sunburnt faces still more highly coloured by heat, and it may be by beer likewise, wear a happy and good-humoured look at this season, which is not always to be found on them. They wish you good-night as they pass, in a franker and more friendly tone than usual. And these signs of human joy, combined with all the evidence of plenty lying round about one, enable a man, for the moment, to cheat himself into a real belief in the superiority of rural felicity. As the days go by, these groups grow scarcer, and are replaced by the heavy creaking waggons, piled high into the air with sheaves, accompanied by two or three boys, hot and shouting, a more staid-looking rustic by the side of the horses, and another, probably lounging at his ease upon the load. The very horses, at such times, as they strain up the last bit of hill before they reach the village, seem under some exceptional excitement, as if they too were conscious of the good time, and cordially sympathized with the feelings of their human friends. And then what a scene of vigorous active work, of rustic "chaff" and geniality, is the stack-yard! The waggon is soon drawn up alongside the fast-rising rick, the horses are taken out, and sent back with an empty wain to the field; and then begins the process of stacking, and what is technically known as "pitching." The men who stand upon the stack, adjust the shocks as they receive them, and two men stand below in the waggon to "pitch" them up to their companions. This work of "pitching" is supposed to be the hardest of all, and is generally done under the eye of the master, who frequently plies a fork himself, just to keep his men up to the mark. Mr. Poyser, our readers will remember, comes in hot and dusty from "pitching," to meet the old squire at the Hall Farm, when the question arises of his giving up some of his "plough-land" to a new comer.

The crop which is usually the first to fall before scythe or sickle is the oat crop. Oats, however, are almost always mown, not reaped, and they are rather a ticklish crop to get in, because if suffered to remain standing till they become the least overripe, they are apt to sheath, as it is called, that is, shed the grain most copiously. After the oats comes the wheat; and if the claim of a field of barley and one of wheat on the score of ripeness be about equal, the barley comes last. Generally speaking, however, the barley crop is a little later than the other two. The amount which one man can cut in a day varies with the condition of the crop. Half-an-acre we believe to be the average quantity. When the straw is unusually thick, or the crop much beaten down by the wind, he cannot do more than a quarter. Wages vary in proportion. The average rate in the midland counties is fourteen shillings and sixpence an acre, so that each man will be earning his seven and three-pence a day, or more than two guineas a week. In corn that has been much beaten and twisted by

violent winds, perhaps double that pay is given, but the men earn no more, while the work is a great deal more fatiguing. The full work of harvest lasts perhaps about five weeks in any one locality, so that those labourers who get constant employment throughout the time can live well during the period, and find themselves six or seven pounds in pocket at the end of it. These harvest earnings are most important; they wipe off the score at the village shop, at the butcher's, baker's, and shoemaker's. It is only by these means that the English peasant, even where wages are esteemed pretty good, contrives to make both ends meet. No man with a wife and family of five or six children can live and pay his way on ten shillings a week. He must get in debt, and harvest just gets him out of it. The hay time of course helps him; and in the hay-field, too, his wife and daughters can earn something. But all put together will not do more than set him straight.

It is a curious sight at the gate of any field where the last load or two of wheat is being thrown up, to watch the gradually increasing group of women and children all pressing forward to the front as eagerly as the crowd on Boxing night at the entrance to a London theatre.

Orantes primi transmittere cursum,

decrepit old dames of eighty, down to toddling little brats of three or four; sturdy matrons, and here and there a pretty girl of eighteen, whose ankles have been rather spoiled by clumsy boots, and whose arms are redder than one would wish, but whose trim waist, bright hazel eye, and thick brown hair, make a considerable array of charms. Many wear those large old-fashioned bonnets of which we do not know the proper name, but which always remind us of those equally old-fashioned leather flops which used at one time to be set on the top of farm-horses' collars. Others have bright-coloured handkerchiefs, chiefly red and yellow, twisted round their heads, which add greatly to the picturesque effect of the whole scene; and all wait impatiently for the signal that their turn has come at last. These, reader, are the gleaners; a class of people dearer to the artist, be he poet or painter, than they are to the farmer or the sportsman. The former has to watch very carefully to see that their husbands, brothers, and sweethearts do not treat them as the reapers of Boaz were instructed to treat Ruth, and let them "even glean among the sheaves," or "let fall also some of the handfuls on purpose." The latter has—how often?—cursed them, not only deeply, but loudly also, when on coming up to a fine piece of wheat-stubble, which he was sure must hold a covey or two of birds, he has found it dotted over from end to end with these vagrant camp-followers of the agricultural army—who tell him with perfect *sans froid*, and indeed with the air of conveying a most welcome piece of intelligence, that "a sight o' partridges went into them tatures this morning." The "tatures" in question being out of the poor wretch's best. But after all they are a very pretty adjunct of harvest-time; and we should be heartily sorry if any invention of science should blot them

from our autumn landscapes. As our young fiend with the hazel eyes returns from her work—her tucked-up apron swelled almost to bursting, and a large bundle on her shoulders, whence the protruding ears of corn, mingling with her dishevelled hair, form a natural and becoming head-dress—you might search far and wide for a prettier object to look upon. The practice of mowing wheat, however, which is rapidly on the increase, to say nothing of the reaping-machine, which makes still cleaner work of it, is, we fear, tending fast to destroy this good old custom. But few ears of corn are left upon the ground under either of these two processes, and when they become universal, the gleaner will scarcely find her labour pay.

But when reaping, and carrying, and gleaning are all over, another crop yet remains to be got in, of no small consequence to the farmer in many parts of England—we mean the beans. The contrast between the ripe bean-field in October, and the flowering bean-field in June, is extremely painful. Nothing is sweeter, and few things prettier, than the latter; few more dismal than the former. The pods turn quite black, and the stalks nearly so, and the whole crop wears a funereal aspect, befitting indeed the last dying days of heat and sunshine in which the bean-harvest is usually gathered, but damping one's spirits none the less. As you look down from an eminence over any wide extent of country in which beans are cultivated, these dark black patches interspersed everywhere between green fields, and soft-shining stubbles, present a most desolate appearance, as if the country had been burned, or partially laid waste by an invader. A good bit of foul beans, though, left standing through September, is a capital thing for the partridge-shooters, especially in these days, when all the stubbles are mown, all the turnips drilled, and all the hedges grubbed up. As a reason for rejoicing and so forth, beans are not thought much of by the peasant mind. The reaping and carrying of them seem to create none of the excitement which attends on the wheat and on the barley. The sombre hue of the plant communicates itself we suppose to the rustic intelligence. And it is not always reckoned as a regular part of "harvest." Harvest is often said to be over when all the corn is in, whatever beans may still be out. The villager, perhaps, regards them as a sort of connecting link between corn and turnips—something much inferior to the first, though nobler than the second; something certainly which would not by itself justify a harvest-home.

Generally speaking, the last thing of all which is cleared off the farmer's ground, is the clover. Sometimes this is fed off by sheep, and sometimes it is mown, made, and regularly stacked. When the clover is mown, then we generally feel that the harvest is indeed over, and that reaper and mower alike have hung up their tools till another year has passed away. Not but what early clover is often mown in patches for fodder, when fodder is scarce. We are speaking of that which is left to grow fully ripe, and to be stacked and stored like hay.

It is remarkable that the farmers complain, in many places, that they cannot get the same amount of work out of their men as their fathers used to get; and they add that they must have machinery to compensate for the falling off in human thews and sinews. If this complaint be only one other note of the regular agricultural growl, we may dismiss it from consideration; but if there be any element of truth in it, the assertion becomes extremely interesting; for to what does it point? It must point to one of two things: either that the labourer will not work as he used, or that he cannot. But that sudden rebellion against toil—that determination not to “slave to death” which is at the bottom of the “won’t”—is generally found only in men whose hearts have waxed fat with plenty, and not in men situated as many of our peasantry are. We cannot imagine, then, that the inferiority complained of is the wilful and deliberate doing of the workmen themselves, in the majority of our rural districts, though we know it to be in some. If, then, we fall back upon the other alternative, and suppose that their strength is really less, how are we to account for that? Is it indeed true that the present generation of English peasantry are worse off than the last; that they get, that is, smaller supplies of nourishing food, less warmth, and worse clothing? In some agricultural districts with which we are acquainted, the labourers could hardly be worse off than they are now; but whether they were ever better off is another question. For the last two or three years meat has been extremely dear, but the dearness has not lasted long enough to have permanently affected any large class of the community, while at the same time it has been to a large extent neutralized by the cheapness of other articles of food. We own we incline to deny the original proposition, or if there be any truth in it we should prefer to set it down to the marked deterioration which has taken place in one important article of the poor man’s diet—we mean his beer. What great agricultural champion will arise to deliver the unhappy labourer from the tyranny of the local brewer, at whose hands he is now obliged to drink stuff which even the publican who sells it cannot defend—which stupifies without intoxicating, and neither slakes his thirst, strengthens his limbs, nor cheers his spirits? Labourers at harvest should always, if possible, have their beer from the farmer.

From one peculiar supply of harvest labour the English farmer has been finding himself cut off more and more every year. Who cannot remember the groups of ragged figures, and half humorous, half savage faces, which ten or eleven or a dozen years ago were always to be met with about harvest time, trudging along the turnpike roads, or reposing on the roadside turf, examining their bundles, or counting their coppers? These were detachments of the great immigration of Celts, who used every August to pour over into this island with the most commendable regularity, and having pocketed what they could of our cash, returned to rail at the Saxon. They still come, but not in the same numbers as formerly. Plague and the sword have done their work, and thousands of stalwart frames lie mouldering in the soil of Virginia, which were once as familiar

as the swallow to the farmsteads of Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. A scanty remnant still dribbles across the Channel, but still sufficiently numerous to render railway travelling in August a more than usually hazardous undertaking. The style in which these unfortunate strangers rush up and down a railway platform, thrusting their matted heads and long reaping hooks into the windows of every carriage in search of Pat, or Tim, or Mike, is exceedingly alarming under any circumstances. But if in a sudden fit of economy you have been rash enough to take a third-class ticket, it is positively appalling. Not contented with brandishing the tools of their trade in a menacing and ferocious manner, they occasionally give utterance to what would appear to be the war-crie of their tribe, if anything rouses them to wrath; a wild unmeaning howl, which as Edie Ochiltree would have said, is "mair like a dog's language than a man's." It is certainly only half human. For these reasons railway travelling during harvest time, in counties still frequented by the Irish, is not to be lightly adventured on; nor when begun, to be pursued without constant vigilance, meditation, and prayer.

Once in the field, however, the Irishman ceases to be a nuisance, and becomes a most serviceable, sober, and indefatigable workman. He toils like a machine, lives hard—far harder than Englishmen could do—and reserves all his drinking for Sundays. His ordinary refreshment is coffee. This he brews in a primitive and simple fashion. He begs the loan of a pail and a gallon of boiling water in the farm-yard. He tosses a pound or two of coffee into the bucket, pours the boiling water upon it, and his breakfast, dinner, or supper, as the case may be, is ready for him. Sunday, however, is a gala day. The gang club their money together, purchase a cask of beer, and retiring into the shade of some friendly hedge-row, there drink confusion to the Saxon and redress to the wrongs of Ould Ireland till the barrel is empty; and they themselves are reduced to the blissful unconsciousness of swine. In a heathen land, as doubtless they consider England to be, this would seem to them the most fitting mode of testifying their contempt for a Sabbath which is hallowed by no Christian rites.

The Atlantic Telegraph.

THAT was a joyous hopeful morning, that 23rd July, in the Kingdom of Kerry, and over all the adjacent royalty of the island of Valencia, for from the recondite Bay of Foilhummerum there was to go forth a thread across the sea, down in the depths of the Atlantic, to take up the warp and woof of the web with which these remote Irishry have bound themselves to the Western world. It was indeed a microcosm on the edge of the cliffs and people of very different condition and degree had been attracted there by the influence of the Atlantic cable. There sat the lady of May Fair in the affected coarseness of her sea-side finery, watching the beat of the sidling wave on the boulders at her feet, and around her wide-eyed in fluttering rags wandered and wondered the unkempt children of the natives, gathering and eating sea-weed from the rocks. The London millionaire sauntered through the crowd of weather-beaten dejected men, half fishermen, half husbandmen, who struggle generation after generation against an unfruitful soil and rude seas for half a livelihood. Dandy capitalists as they lay on the sward (the centres of circles of rustic admirers) talked of Goodwood and grouse through a hum of Erse. The most ancient type of pig known to these isles scratched his long line of rattling ribs against the newest form of telegraph posts. Beside the hut, almost as destitute of internal comfort as an Indian wigwam, rose the smart telegraph house, stored with the subtlest instruments for measuring the subdued lightning. All the energy, polish, and speculative mind of civilization were in close contact with the lassitude, gaunt uncouthness, and passive indifference of a race which is now animated only by the hope of exile and emigration.

It was a serious disappointment to the many who had journeyed a hundred miles for the sight, that the *Great Eastern* did not come to Valencia or close in shore. But they are used to disappointments, even in potatoes. Nor did the men-of-war give them a chance; but the *Hawk* and the *Caroline* rolled thrice as much as any vessels else could do; and besides, the *Princess Alexandra* Ballast-Board yacht was there, so that what with a few yachts, and the pleasant presence of the Chief Secretary, and strange Saxon cablemen in knickerbockers, and fair Saxon ladies in kirtles, and some streaks of smoke on the horizon, there was really a good deal of interest and excitement provided for the masses on the occasion. It was a great thing to see the shore-end carried up into the telegraph house, and many forms of nose were obtused in curious planes against its windows, in order to keep the eager eyes fixed on the operators, who were then generally engaged in operating on

ments and drinks. It was greater still to behold that famous roller, the *Caroline*, steam out westward, trailing the shore-end after her, till she ran below the horizon altogether. The Knight of Kerry—hospitable, gracious Lord of Valencia, who has faith in some unproven theorem that the cable will work much good to his kingdom—worked as hard as if the good would at once come to pass. And at last the time comes when the *Great Eastern* is to begin her functions, and the operation of laying the Atlantic Cable really commences. Now, in a few words, let us endeavour to understand what that operation was—correct some errors, and make a few reflections, premising that our readers are supposed to be fully acquainted with the details of the Diary published in the newspapers. The cable stowed in the *Great Eastern* was of a form recommended by a committee of scientific and practical men. There was not a moment during which it was let alone, and on all occasions it responded to the tests. Therefore it was considered so perfect that “a fault” was not expected to occur in the laying down. There are many people who don’t know what “a fault” is—who are ignorant of the meaning of “dead earth.” Let us explain—

When the insulation of the core of the cable is perfect, there is a certain amount of resistance to the passage of an electric current through it which is measured by the deflection of a suspended magnet, to which is attached a tiny mirror, so placed as to catch the light of a lamp through a small aperture, and to reflect it on a graduated index. This is a description of Thomson’s galvanometer. The movement of the light measures the opposition encountered by the current in going along the copper, and when the resistance is diminished very much the magnet is proportionably deflected by the increased flow of electricity, and the light moves to the extremity of the scale or vanishes off it altogether. Now if an injury be done to the gutta percha, so that the copper is exposed to the action of a conducting body, the escape of the current takes place from the hole in accordance with certain fixed laws—part going off to the conductor, and part continuing its course along the copper to the end of the cable. The escape is at once detected by the galvanometer, and the electricians know “a fault” has occurred. Sometimes the electro-chemical current, by temporary deposits of gas or salts of copper in the injury, mends the fault; and if the wound be not very large, so as to lay bare the copper in contact with a conducting medium, there is generally enough of current to transmit signals. But, as a rule, the tendency of “faults” is to increase rapidly; so that a cable in which one is detected cannot be considered at all safe, and may indeed become useless in a moment. “Dead earth” is a deadly fault. It means that an injury has been caused to the gutta percha of such a nature that a perfect contact has been established between the copper core and some other good conductor; and in that case all the current passes away, and the galvanometer indicates that there is no resistance to its passage—the insulation of the cable being destroyed, so that no message whatever can be sent by it. There is no course to be

pursued when "dead earth" occurs but to take up the cable and remove the injured portion; and if that cannot be done, to abandon the enterprise and consider the portion which is laid as useless for electrical purposes. In the case of "a fault," the judgment of the electricians is called into play, and they have to decide whether it is of such a description as to render it imperative for the engineers to undertake the risk of picking up the cable and taking it out, or if it can be worked through with reasonable chances of endurance. To guide them to a decision, they generally try to "break down" the fault, as it is called, by increasing the battery power so much as to produce "dead earth" by the action of the current; in which case the cable must be taken up, and if they fail, they may work through the wire with a reduced number of cells.

By wonderful application and close watching, by the nicest calculations, by exquisite instruments, by tabulated formulæ in which the agency of heat, of water-pressure, of conductivity, of induction, of the subtlest physical laws is reduced to appreciable results, electricians are enabled to work up to the "fault" or "dead earth" miles and miles away in the depths of the Atlantic, and to estimate its distance and its magnitude. When the "fault" or "dead earth" is hauled on board, they can detect the place at once; the injured piece is removed, and a splice and joint are made between the severed ends of the cable. This is done by laying bare the copper wires, filing them to a neat section like the splices of a fishing-rod, soldering them over, binding the splice with fine wire, and then, by means of a lamp, covering it with layer after layer of gutta-percha and Chatterton's non-conducting compound till it is in a fit state to have the lengths of protecting wire covered with manilla drawn down and twisted together over it, so as to make the joint stronger than the original cable. That done, the cable is handed over to the engineers, who resume the process of paying out.

The gentleman in charge of the electrical arrangements and testing of the cable was Mr. de Sauty, the experienced electrician of the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, assisted by Mr. Saunders, Mr. Willoughby Smith, and other able and zealous officers of the company's staff. The principal person on board the ship was Mr. S. Canning, engineer of the company, who superintended the paying out and picking up, and who was charged with the control of the whole expedition; and next to him was Mr. Clifford, who was the head of the mechanical department. Both these gentlemen were assisted by Messrs. Temple and an able and experienced staff, and had under their orders a corps of cable-layers, smiths, artificers, and skilful mechanics of all kinds. Captain Anderson, one of the officers of the Cunard line of steamers, was in command of the *Great Eastern*; and as he rightly considered that in critical moments all his attention would be demanded by the management of the vast ship, application was made to the Lords of the Admiralty for the assistance of an officer who would take charge of the navigation; and Staff Commander Moriarty, of the *Fox*, whose services on board the

Agamemnon, in 1858, ought to make his name familiar to the public, was allowed leave of absence for the purpose of giving his aid to Captain Anderson. They worked together with the utmost zeal and harmony; and in all their calculations, made under the greatest difficulties, agreed within a few seconds as to the ship's position after drifting in unknown currents amid fogs and storm.

There were two companies represented on board. The Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company had chartered the *Great Eastern* to lay the cable they had contracted to put down from Valencia to Newfoundland for the Atlantic Telegraph Company; and their officers had the sole control of the expedition and all matters connected with it; but on the completion of the work the representatives of the Atlantic Telegraph Company took possession of the cable and came into power. Mr. Field, as Director of the New York board, and general representative of the company, was in possession of the test messages enclosed in sealed envelopes, which were to be opened as soon as the cable was declared to be in readiness for their transmission.

Mr. Varley, eminent as an electrician, was strictly enjoined not to interfere or to express an opinion concerning any of the operations in the testing-room. He was ordered by his board not even to give his advice if he were asked for it, unless the demand were made in writing, and in that case he was only to answer in writing, and to insert in the written document a distinct declaration that the opinion so given was not in any way to bind the company which he represented. Professor W. Thomson of Glasgow, whose name is known over Europe, and who is certainly one of the most distinguished and acute physicists in the world, was admitted on board as a sort of scientific aide-de-camp to Mr. Varley, but he was not to depart from the course indicated by the board to his principal. So there were two gentlemen, full of suggestions and ideas and formulas, reduced to silence—two great guns, spiked as it were, but charged to the muzzle. They were nigh bursting, and no wonder; no wonder, too, if they were driven to resent unconsciously the position in which they were placed by large speculative discourses in private, and by rigid critical remarks, which must in such cases assume a censorial character. In the gravest discussions they held no part. The only way in which they could give utterance to their feelings was by asking questions.

Captain Hamilton, one of the directors of the Atlantic Company, was stationed at Valencia to receive the test messages and to enter on possession of the station at Foilhummerum as soon as the task of the contractors was over. Mr. Gooch represented the *Great Eastern* directors on board the ship. Among the passengers not directly engaged in the operation were M. Jules Despescher, of Paris, the author of a scheme for laying an Atlantic cable from the Peninsula, *viâ* the Azores and St. Pierre, to America; Dr. W. H. Russell, engaged to write a history of Atlantic telegraphy, who subsequently acceded to the request of the directors of the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company to compile a *Diary of the proceed-*

ings on board; Mr. R. Dudley, who was to illustrate the book; Mr. J. C. Deane; Mr. H. O'Neil, the distinguished painter of "Eastward, Ho!" and "Westward, Ho!" and several young gentlemen, to whom, in various capacities, the directors had granted passages. As Mr. Seward was in a restive mood, he would not recommend President Johnson to order any United States man-of-war to accompany the expedition, but as the capital was almost exclusively English, the work English, and the companies English, their absence was only to be regretted as an indication of Mr. Seward's ill-health and pettishness.

The Admiralty commissioned H.M.S. *Terrible*, Captain Napier, to accompany the *Great Eastern*, and ordered H.M.S. *Sphinx*, Captain V. Hamilton, destined for the North American station, to proceed across in company, and to take soundings for the use of the expedition; and Admiral Hope was directed to station vessels off Trinity Bay to meet it, and to render the undertaking all the aid in his power. Thus far everything seemed to promise well, and as one of the directors said, "If we fail to lay the cable now, it will be owing to some trivial circumstance we cannot foresee or guard against." The *Great Eastern* was in good condition for the voyage, and only wanted some repairs to her boilers, and the removal of many tons of mussels and barnacles from her bottom, to make her in the best possible form for speed and stability. Her floats were, however, reefed, so that her maximum speed was not more than nine knots an hour, which was two knots more than the highest rate at which it was intended to pay out the cable. Provisions in abundance—droves of oxen, flocks of sheep, farm-yards of poultry, geese, and ducks, tons of ice, furnished materials for monster bills of fare; and the crowing of cocks in the early morning, the bleating and baying of sheep, the cackling of geese and quacking of ducks intermingled strangely with the puffing and blowing of donkey-engines, and the hiss and rush of the great Atlantic waves which seethed around us. As for the lowing of kine and oxen, it was soon cut short, for a murrain came on the cattle, which were killed to save their lives day after day, till not one was left. We did not know till our return that a pestilence had broken out among the bovines in England.

The decks of the ship were perforated with more chimneys than I could ever count. They seemed to grow and die in the course of a night—one here, another there. Great iron cranes stood up stiffly, as if they had mistaken the ship for a quay-wall, and had got on board by accident. Carpenters' benches, forges, anvils, were mixed up with a flotilla of boats, all got in-board (except two for fear of "a man overboard"), in order to be out of the way of the cable-stoppers all over the deck; and, turn which way we might, it was nigh hopeless to try and evade the volumes of smoke which were hurled out of smoke-stacks and funnels, bow amidships and astern. The first evening of our starting was delightful, but at night the rumble of machinery as the cable flew out was too pronounced to be quite agreeable. That, however, was so monotonous and regular that we

soon grew used to it, and at length liked it so much, that the sight of the wheels revolving, and jockeys jumping up and down, was positively agreeable and exhilarating. And when the noise ceased, and the wheels stood still astern, there was gloom in the ship, as when the engine itself becomes motionless in some ill-fated craft with a lee-shore not far distant. Proportionately to our confidence and good spirits was the shock which came early next morning, when the stoppage of the vessel woke every sleeper, and words, "There's a fault overboard," at once dispelled the delusion that the *Great Eastern* was about to run over in one easy uninterrupted course to Trinity Bay. There was a gathering around the testing room, in which the batteries and wire ends and galvanometers are worked, and which is darkened by curtains in order that the ray from the mirror already mentioned may be watched more easily. Then as time wore on, and, as it appeared, electricians did not know, owing to the varying nature of the fault, whether it existed 20 or 40 miles away, or indeed whether it was not at the shore-end close to Valencia, a feeling of disappointment and doubt began to arise, which was not at all decreased when it was decided to haul up the cable till the fault was discovered. By a few hours study and observation we had become accustomed to one process, and the mode in which it was effected, and we had no curiosity to see the reverse operation.

When all was ready, the word was given to "cut the cable," and the executioner having a sharp saw in his hand approached his unconscious victim as it reposed somewhere in the neighbourhood of the jockey wheels, and with two or three rasps divided the iron sinews and copper marrow, so that the seaward end was drawn astern, and then with chain and hawser and wire rope splashed into the sea; *that* always made one jump. But after a moment it was seen that the wire rope which sawed up and down through the water, held on stiffly to something or other. When the end was over, stoppers were let go with much shouting from point to point of the side, but it happened sometimes that wire rope had to be let go after the cable ere the ship could be brought round with her bow to the point where her stern had been when the cable was being paid out, and it was quite necessary that her bow should be turned eastwards instead of westwards before the picking-up operation was commenced, as an oblique strain would have been dangerous. The wire rope being secured at the bows was slowly hauled in by the picking-up machinery when the proper position of the ship had been attained. This apparatus consisted of a series of V wheels, drum wheels and spur wheels, worked by two small steam engines on the deck, which were supplied with steam by boilers at the sides of the ship near the bow. There was a dynamometer and an indicator, and breaks and breaksmen, but it seemed to me as if one of the engines, at all events, was an old affair, and the other, if new, certainly did not rejoice in youthful strength and efficiency, for its eccentric got out of gear, and had to be helped with a handspike and an elastic bandage. If "paying out" very soon became monotonous in its

regularity, if cutting and letting go the cable was always exciting, it must be confessed that "taking in" never for a moment suffered the men to rest, and that "picking-up" combined tediousness and feverish excitement to a degree never equalled, except in some masterly surgical operation. Not a soul save some solitary sailor on duty was visible near the stern, which had but a few moments before contained all the energy of official life, curiosity, and amateur observation of the floating town. To the bows they clustered—officers and all, and gazed down on the black cable, which was always animated with a strenuous *vis inertiae*, and fought as hard as the sea-serpent himself against the force which brought it in over the wheel at the bow. There again Mr. Canning, Mr. Clifford, and their staff directed and regulated. Captain Anderson now watched the cable as it was strained upwards—now stood on the bridge, keeping his eye on the head of the ship, and giving orders for her management, and the acoustic tube and whistle which was carried from the bow to the bridge communicated the various demands to "go ahead with the screw," or "to turn astern," or "to stop her," which the varying relations of ship and cable demanded.

When the first piece of wire was found in the cable, no one had any idea but that it was there by accident; and as the cable was perfect up to the moment of sending the last tests from the ship to the shore, it at once occurred to us that the wire had been driven into the cable whilst it was passing through the machinery astern. But when the fault of July 29th was examined, a strong suspicion was at once aroused that the injury was caused by some villain on board, for the wire was driven in an artistic manner right through the cable from side to side. Several attempts to pierce the cable by pressing similar pieces of wire against it with the heel utterly failed. The men declared it was the work of an assassin. Had he been caught, the world might have heard something of an attempt to administer Lynch law. One man was suspected, but there was no evidence against him. When the last fault took place, M. Despescher, on guard in the tank, saw one of the cablemen stoop down to tie his shoe-string. That was nothing, if men were not suspicious. Besides that man did not belong to the gang then at work, but came down before his time. Then Mr. Field, who followed M. Despescher, heard a scraping of wire, and the men heard it too, and called out to the man on deck.

Some people seem to think that the mischief could have been avoided if the man on deck had heard the alarm, but that is not so, as the cable could not then have been arrested in its course overboard. The only advantage gained would have been the warning to the electricians, that a wire had gone over sticking out of the cable. As it is, the nature of the third fault must be a mystery for the present. It is only surmise that it was caused by another end of wire. An examination of the cable shook all faith in its alleged perfection, for it was found that several pieces of wire were broken in the coils, and some of the wire proved to be brittle

and ill-tempered. This discovery allayed the excitement caused by the suspicion of malice, but it damnified the character of the cable, as it revealed a strong-suicidal tendency on its part. As yet that grave question of accident or design is undecided. Our subsequent exploit, however, tends to diminish the chances of malicious injury materially. For who will run the risk of detection, especially under the close inspection to be established in future, in order to inflict an injury which can be at once found out, and which can be hooked up from the deepest part of the Atlantic? A few words as to the grappling which has excited so much attention. The final breakage of the cable took us all by surprise. Nothing was ready. No buoy could be slipped over. But Staff Commander Moriarty and Captain Anderson determined the exact position of the extreme part of the cable actually laid to be in lat. $51^{\circ} 24' 40''$ N., long. $39^{\circ} 4' 30'$ W.—to the actual seconds,—and then they marked down the ground or sea gone over in the picking up till the cable broke, and traced the end to lat. $51^{\circ} 25'$, long. $39^{\circ} 1'$. On noon of the 3rd, the *Great Eastern* having steamed and drifted in a fog 46 miles E. of the end of cable, began to grapple, caught cable in 2,000 fathoms, and slipped buoy No. 1 close to the line of cable and 10 miles W. of the first lift of it on August 4. Then she drifted 7 or 8 miles S.E. of the buoy in a fog till noon of 5th August, and at noon on 6th August she was 16 miles further to the eastward, enveloped in fog again, and had to steam to the westward, groping her way and looking for the buoy till she got within 3 miles of the broken end, and grappled the cable again. Then, when the second swivel broke on August 8th, she slipped buoy No. 2 to mark the spot, some 10 miles W. of buoy No. 1, and left these two marks on the ocean when she was obliged to abandon the attempt. Sailors alone can appreciate the extraordinary skill displayed in the proceedings thus simply stated.

The results of the Atlantic Telegraph Expeditions of 1857, 1858, and 1865 fairly analyzed, present the following general conclusions:—A submarine cable can be laid between Ireland and Newfoundland, for it was done in 1858. Messages can be sent through a cable so laid, even if it were not perfectly insulated. The difficulties in the laying of a submarine cable are much diminished by the use of one ship instead of two, and the *Great Eastern* affords singular facilities for the operation. If a cable be broken, it can be caught by grapnels in the deepest water of the Atlantic plateau; and therefore the danger of losing it altogether from fracture is considerably diminished. The cable can be stopped when a fault is discovered, and ten miles of it can be hauled on board from a depth of more than two miles. A fault can be cut out, and the cable re-spliced on board with the greatest ease. Buoys can be moored in upwards of 2,000 fathoms of water, so as to ride out a gale without shifting. Faults, whether designed or accidental, can be almost immediately detected and remedied. The insulation of the cable is much improved by immersion. The cable is capable of bearing ten times the weight to which it is subjected in the

process of paying out in 2,400 fathoms. The paying-out machinery answers perfectly; the picking-up machinery is exceedingly imperfect; and finally, it is most desirable to have a cable so constructed that the outer covering shall, if possible, be proof against injury; for, although the cable furnished by "The Construction and Maintenance Company" was exceedingly pliable, sank easily, and was of proper specific gravity, it appears to have been liable to accidental or intentional damage. Could the cable have been paid out without the occurrence of a fault, the *Great Eastern* would have accomplished her task with as much ease and certainty as the packet boat travels from Folkestone to Boulogne. Picking-up must always be attended with a certain amount of risk; the risk indeed may be much diminished by the construction of a proper apparatus; but the principal improvement to be effected lies in obviating the necessity of transferring the end of the cable from the stern to the bow. There is no reason of a mechanical nature to prevent the paying-out apparatus being so adjusted as to have a reverse action, and, by the aid of steam, to be fitted for hauling in the cable; but if it shall be found undesirable to unite these two functions in the one machine, there is certainly no solid objection to the erection of a picking-up apparatus astern, side by side with the paying-out machinery. Nautically there is a difficulty. A large ship, particularly the *Great Eastern*, will not go stern to windward or keep to the sea; but Mr. Gooch has proposed the means of steering the *Great Eastern* stern foremost by means of a small double screw placed at the stern, under her quarter, which promises effectually to obviate any difficulty in working picking-up machinery placed in the stern of the vessel. Although the grappling of a cable at the bottom of the ocean was a very great feat, it may be at once admitted no one ever contemplated the possibility of effecting it. What has yet to be proved after all is whether the cable can be taken up from the bottom to the surface, and secured on board the vessel?

It may be observed that the cable only weighs fourteen hundred-weight per mile in the water, and that it is made to bear the strain of seven miles of its own weight; but we have already seen that such calculations are not to be relied upon; swivel-bolts and hawsers gave way at strains far inferior to the estimated breaking-point. In grappling for the cable, the point to be aimed at is one mile or so from the broken end; because if the grapnel catches there, the loose end as it comes up will hang perpendicularly for a certain distance from the grapnel with a line of cable hooked at the other side, and will, in all probability, become entwined with it as the wire rope revolves in the water whilst it is being pulled up to the bow. Should the grapnel catch the cable at a point eight or ten miles from the end, it may be found necessary to bear upon the cable till it breaks, in order to get the end for the purposes just mentioned.

There are no currents at the bottom of the Atlantic—all is a black void, in which it is doubtful if there is a trace of life, or light, or motion; it is asserted that star fish, with minute and almost microscopic shell fish

in their stomachs, have been taken up from the bottom of the Atlantic; and, as there were traces of colour on their bodies, it has been argued that the light must penetrate the abyss to a certain extent; but our reasoning on these points is as likely to be fallacious as our knowledge is limited, and the only positive information we have is that the bottom where the cable lies consists of the finest ooze, and that there is no current or agitation of the waters beneath. Should the *Great Eastern* pick up the cable, splice it, and return to Trinity Bay with the remainder paid out, the company would be in possession of two cables instead of one—there is not the least fear of there being a deficiency of work for both. New York has at least as much to say to London as it has to San Francisco; and between Europe and America the wants of civilization will need a dozen lines of telegraph as soon as the means of gratifying them are developed.

There is another consideration connected with the extension of submarine telegraphs of very great importance. We have seen that cables can be grappled for and caught, and even though it may not be possible to take them up, it is certain they can be destroyed. In event of war, therefore, an enemy's cruiser could not only interrupt communication between the one portion of the belligerent state and the other connected by submarine telegraph, but might cut off the communication between one continent and another, in order to annoy the enemy and interrupt his connection with neutral states. Whatever understanding may be arrived at, no one who has witnessed the operations of the *Great Eastern*, in her recent expedition, can doubt of the very speedy establishment of telegraphic communication between Europe and America across the Atlantic, and of its rapid development by the facilities which the monster ship so singularly possesses for work her designer and builder never intended or contemplated.

The Social History of the Navy.

NORMAN could be more unfair than to charge the British public with anything like a want of appreciation of the British Navy. But owing, we suppose, to the nature of the case, to the fact that naval life is, from its necessary conditions, isolated from that of the rest of the country, very little is known about the history and organization of the Navy; and it is seldom heard of, except when it is engaged in fighting, or on such rare occasions of holiday and display as this autumn has witnessed. Quite recently, for instance, a certain internal change in that service—we mean the abolition of the rank of master—was announced, and passed almost without notice, though there was nothing of importance going on to distract or absorb the country's attention. Yet the change, while by no means insignificant in its bearing on the efficacy of her Majesty's ships, is one emphatically calculated to remind people of the transitions which the Navy has gone through. The title of master is at least seven centuries old, to begin with, and is probably a great deal older. In modern times, that officer, though ranking only with the lieutenants—and with them in such a way that, failing higher officers, the youngest lieutenant would take command of the ship before him,—has been, in some important respects, the captain's *alter ego*. Conjointly with the captain, he has been responsible for the ship's safety, and has had it in his power formally to discharge himself from the responsibility, on his advice being rejected. He has been charged with the task of taking the chief observations by which the vessel's place on the chart is determined. He has kept the ship's log. He has superintended the steering in action, and at all critical times. He has had the rigging and stores under his peculiar direction. All this points to the conclusion that his office must be the relic of a more considerable office; that he must represent the masters of a day when the master sailed the ship, and the captain fought her, and when the master was thus an authority of much more consequence than he has been since we have had officers who were captains and masters in one. Such a fact, we say, as the abolition of this office, the merging of its special duties in those of the lieutenants, and the final disappearance of its very title, seems specially fitted to suggest a brief review of the phases through which the profession has passed. It is curious to consider what a long time the organization of our men-of-war has taken to form itself, and yet how ancient the essential rudiments of that organization are.

One of the first things that strikes an inquirer in this, as in other departments, is the slowness with which our ancestors arrived at the full adoption of the principle of the division of labour. We talk now of civilians, and military men, and naval men; but in the Middle Ages gentlemen abounded who were all three. The chief governors of the

great fleet which Richard I. sent to the Holy Land in 1189 were Gerard, Archbishop of Aix, and Bernard, Bishop of Bayonne, who, together with certain temporal barons, were called "ductores et gubernatores totius navigii regis," "justiciarii navigii regis," and so forth. The functionary who discharged the duties of our Admiralty in John's time was Archdeacon of Taunton; and the French look back with great respect to a certain naval potentate who was Archbishop of Bordeaux. The first sea commanders, in fact, were the feudal aristocracy, lay and clerical, of the kingdom; and the barons passed from life in a castle to life in a ship as a matter of course. Each ship had a master or *rector* who sailed her, just as a yacht is sailed for her owner now; but in her capacity of a king's ship she was commanded in the higher sense, either alone or in company with others, by some of those who did the general governing work of the kingdom. As early as Richard's time, too, sea-laws were reduced to something like regular form; and these governing men saw them carried out afloat as they would have seen a different kind of laws carried out ashore. Richard's "Articles of War," if we may so call them, were of a primitive, not to say barbarous character. When one sailor murdered another, he was fastened to the dead body and thrown with it into the sea. Sailors who gambled were dipped from the mast, according to what seems to have been a custom of the remotest antiquity; for we are told they were to be dipped "after the fashion of mariners,"—*more marinarium*. A thief had his head shaved, and pitch poured over it; he was then feathered and put ashore. The dipping, a severer form of which was "keel-hauling," lasted for many ages; and indeed it is only since the close of the great war that the naval code has ceased to breathe the spirit of a terrible severity. The early naval history of England, however, was not unworthy of her people. Richard's fleet of galleys, with its heavy busses and dromons for carrying horses and provisions, weathered a heavy gale in the Bay of Biscay; and the king himself sank a Saracen vessel off Acre, after a very stiff fight. But the first regular victory at sea, of the long line of victories which ended at Trafalgar, was won in 1217, during the minority of Henry III. Prince Louis of France hoped to seize the English crown after John's death, by the aid of the barons who had sought his father's help against John; but the fleet he employed against us, under Eustace the Monk, was destroyed by a fleet of sixteen ships under Hubert de Burgh, assisted by Sir Philip d'Albini and Sir Henry de Turberville. It is worthy of notice that even at this early period the English manœuvred for the weather-gage, and carried the day by boarding. But we refer to the battle here chiefly to illustrate what we have said of the command of ships in those days. Hubert de Burgh was a statesman and a soldier. D'Albini and De Turberville were among the regular fighting barons of the day, men of the camp and the tournament. Another famous warrior at sea was William Longespee, Earl of Salisbury, one of Henry II.'s natural sons by Fair Rosamond. A baron's banner was one month flying outside a Scotch castle at a siege; next month it floated from the mast of a galley in the breezes of the Channel

off Winchelsea or Rye; and again it was seen in the port of some Greek island, to which it had brought a dying crusader wounded at Antioch or Damietta. The same man was Constable of the Tower to-day, a Justiciary to-morrow, and Admiral of the Fleet soon after. To understand all that such careers implied of energy and daring, we must remember what were the resources of nautical science in the thirteenth century. When the sailor could not see the Polar star, the only help he had to guide him was obtained by "charging a needle with loadstone, and fixing it in a rush, or to a cork which was placed in water." * To such men the sea was full of a mysterious poetry and a religious terror. During a great storm, in which William Longespee was all but wrecked, he saw a bright light at the head of the mast, and near it the apparition of a beautiful lady, who kept the light alive in spite of the howling wind and the beating rain. Then the earl knew that his ship was safe by the goodness of the Blessed Virgin; for when he was first made a knight he had ordered a wax taper to be kept constantly burning before her altar during mass.

The title of "admiral" was known in England before the end of the thirteenth century. It is supposed to be of Arabic derivation, and had been applied long before in the East to governors not necessarily discharging maritime duties of any kind. From 1300 onwards it bore in England a signification similar to that which it bears now, but its duties and relative rank were not strictly defined. The admiral's pay in 1300 was two shillings a day; the captain's one shilling; that of the master sixpence; while the common men received threepence a day each, and were fed on herrings, bacon, bread, and wine. We hear of "captains and admirals," "captains of the sailors of the Cinque Ports," "masters or rectors," and "a chaplain of the fleet." While, however, "admirals" gradually acquired a distinct superiority, and "captains" held a high office from the beginning, it is a most characteristic fact, that a great elasticity always distinguished these arrangements of rank in the Navy from the beginning. We shall find proofs of this very late; and we may safely regard it, and the mixture of men of different social classes which it involved, as one of the most valuable and important features of the service. During the feudal period, for instance, of which we have been speaking, the greatest names of the country are found in the list of admirals. That list comprised during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Sir William Clinton, Sir Geoffrey Saye, Sir John Roos, Sir William Montacute, Sir Walter Manny, Sir Richard Fitzalan, and many others of the same stamp; and such appointments were expressly made on the ground that "no one could chastise or rule" the seamen, "unless he was a great man." The admiral's sway in those ages, too, was not naval only in the strict sense, as now, but comprehended an important jurisdiction over the maritime counties. But, at the same time, there was an opening for seamen of inferior condition and more narrowly nautical experience. They were not only the regular "masters" of ships, but when able and zealous, rose to positions of great importance. Such a man was Crabbe,

* Sir Harris Nicolas.

a Scotch sailor who abandoned the cause of his countrymen for that of Edward III., and who, having fought with Edward against the French in the great battle of Sluys, was made by him governor of thirty or forty vessels. This tradition of employing seamen of all kinds of sea-training in the Navy, and raising foremast men to the quarterdeck, descended from the feudal times, when the minstrels played on the fore-castle, and the shields of the knights hung over the bulwarks, to the Tudors and Stuarts. It was this which Elizabeth availed herself of to secure gallant adventurers bred in the merchant-service, like Drake and Hawkins, for the royal fleet. The two services played into each other's hands. The old kings pressed the merchant vessels when they were wanted for war, and protected them when employed in their own pursuits. For centuries the Navy was half-military, half-marine, and only by slow degrees did the pure naval officer—gentleman and seaman both in one—become developed out of the conflicting elements. A prophecy of Collingwood and Nelson existed in the Elizabethan Lord Howard of Effingham. But long after his time the most picturesque mixture of ranks existed. Gentlemen who had gone to sea as boys held command cheek-by-jowl with honest "tarpaulins,"—as they were called in the seventeenth century—who had once been boatswains, and with pure soldiers, like Blake, who had never trodden a deck till they were forty or fifty. The nomenclature of naval rank as it existed down to our own time, testified to its hybrid origin. "Captain" and "lieutenant" reflect the military part,— "master," "mate," and "midshipman," the nautical part,—of the common pedigree. And as the Navy has become more a special, more a royal, as distinct from a mercantile service, the titles implying military dignity have gained on the other. The "mate," originally "master's mate," has become a "sub-lieutenant;" the "volunteer" has become a "naval cadet;" and the honest old designation of "master," long shorn of great part of its importance, is about to be swept away altogether.

These changes came about very gradually; it is not possible, and it would be tedious if it were possible, to trace them in detail. Naval historians usually give Henry VIII. the credit of setting the Royal Navy on something like its modern basis, of building special war-ships, appointing commissioners, and constituting a Navy-office. Large vessels with port-holes for guns did not exist before his time, and were not numerous till long after it. In Elizabeth's reign, the "Instructions" issued for the regulation of some of the great expeditions, show that the modern system was forming itself, and amuse us by the quaint strictness of their provisions. Prayers were to be read twice a day, a ceremony which has now shrunk into one divine service on Sundays; and it was ordered that "no man, soldier, or other mariner, do dispute of matters of religion, for it is not fit that unlearned men should openly argue of so high and mystical matters."* "No person," (say the "Instructions,") "shall dare to strike any captain, lieutenant, master, or other officer, upon pain of death." The watch was set every night "by trumpet or drum, and singing the

* LEBLANC'S History.

Lord's prayer." But the directions to ships for keeping their places in the squadron, are not unlike those which might be issued in our own days, and every branch of sea-life made a great advance in that reign. The opening of foreign countries gave an impulse to trade, and the passion for adventure made everything relating to the sea and to the Navy an object of interest to the English. Private noblemen and gentlemen fitted out expeditions at their own risk, or persuaded the chary Queen to lend them two or three vessels, and went roaming, and fighting the Spaniards over the whole world. It was inevitable that, in an age at once warlike and literary, there should a few men come up who handled the philosophy of all this; who in the interval of hard work and hard fighting, and often, no doubt, in the solitude of night watches, meditated on the extension of our commerce, and the improvement of our Navy, and employed their shore leisure in putting their ideas on record. One of these, Admiral Sir William Monson, deserves to be more widely known than he is. Of a knightly family in Lincolnshire, now in the peerage, he passed two years as a youngster at Balliol College, Oxford, but was a boy when he went to sea, and was present in an engagement at the age of sixteen. He was with the roving Earl of Cumberland in some of his voyages. He was in the Cadiz expedition with the Earl of Essex. He was employed as an admiral both by Elizabeth and James. But what distinguished him from the common run of fighting-men, was his turn for philosophizing on the work in which they were engaged. His *Naval Tracts* are highly curious for the insight they give us into the Navy of that day. He was a great advocate for officers who were "seamen bred." Among the causes of the discouragement of seamen, he notices "the preferring of young, needy, and inexperienced gentlemen captains over them in their own ships;" and also the "placing lieutenants above the masters in the king's ships, which has never been used till of late years." We gather from him that at that time each captain appointed his lieutenant, while the masters were selected and recommended to the Admiralty by the Trinity House. The masters had previously served as "masters' mates," and had risen from the ranks. There were, therefore, certain duties for which they were naturally unfit; and Sir William Monson, though protesting against all unwise use of the power of appointing lieutenants, was in favour of the existence of the class for all that. "A lieutenant," says he, "is an employment for a gentleman well-bred, who knows how to entertain ambassadors, gentlemen, and strangers, when they come on board." Already it was found that diplomatic and civil duties might fall upon naval officers, and that mere tars would not do for the king's service. By-and-by it was seen that though tars could seldom be made gentlemen, gentlemen might be made tars; and to their entry in time to undergo the process we owe the Howes, Rodneys, Jervises, and Collingwoods of a subsequent age. In Sir William's time, and for some generations, there were here and there educated officers like himself, who were seamen and gentlemen at one and the same time. More generally, however, the captain was dependant for the nautical management of his ship on the master. Accordingly, we

learn from the *Naval Tracts* that, though the captain could displace any other inferior officer, he could not displace the master. All he could do was to stop his wages till the complaint had been heard by the principal officers who, under the Lord Admiral, or Lord High Admiral, discharged the duties of the Admiralty. The peculiar relation between these two chief officers of a man-of-war must have been quite familiar to the public of the seventeenth century; for a Scotch divine, in a book against Erastianism, speaks of their "co-ordinate jurisdiction," when he wishes to illustrate the relation which ought to prevail between Church and State.*

Thanks, also, to Sir William Monson, we know how the British sailor was fed on board her Majesty's ships under Queen Elizabeth. There were four "flesh days" in the week, during which he had beef and pork, with pease, alternately. On "fish days" he had salt fish, ling or cod, with seven ounces of butter, and fourteen ounces of cheese. His allowance of beer was handsome, a gallon daily, or a quart at every meal. There was a surgeon on board each ship, who had a mate under him. Sir William contrasts the cleanliness of our vessels with that of the often finer and larger vessels of the Spaniards, which, he says, were "foul and beastly." At the same time there were complaints of the pursers and their abuses—complaints which lasted for generations. Sometimes the beer stank, the butter was rancid, and the cheese populous. These articles vanished from the naval dietary, however, in the course of time; while the purser was succeeded by the genteel "paymaster" of our age, who would as soon think of picking a messmate's pocket as of swindling one of the ship's company, either in the matter of slops or pay. Whatever the harshness, however, with which the seaman of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was treated—and one of his punishments, we may mention, was to have his tongue "gagged or scraped" for blaspheming—he was already observed to be fond of grumbling. Sir William Monson loved him much, had infinite confidence in him, and lost no opportunity of advancing his interests. But he tells him of his faults with fearful plainness of speech, and that in the course of a generally complimentary dedication. "Certain it is," declares the old admiral, "neither birds nor horses can show more extravagant lewdness, more disorder of life, and less fear of God, than your carriage discovers when you come on shore, and cast off the command your superior officers had over you." Jack, it seems, was the true descendant of Chancer's *Shipman*:—

And certainly he was a good fellow;
 Ful many a draught of win he hadde draw
 From Burdeaux ward, while that the chapman alpe,
 Of nice conscience toke he no kepe.

Hardy he was, and wise, I undertake:
 With many a tempest hadde his berd be shake.

He was also the true ancestor of the man who supplied anecdotes and figured in farces for the amusement of our grandfathers; who threw his hard-earned money overboard when he could not get on shore, and wasted

* *Aaron's Rod Blossoming.* By GILLESPIE.—MILTON's *Calisp.*

it even more mischievously when he could; and whom the founders of sailors' homes and savings' banks are now seeking to bring within the pale of a decent and prudent civilization. The men of the Navy have changed less since Sir William Monson's days than the ships. When Queen Elizabeth died, she left forty-two vessels of war in good order. Only two of these were of 1,000 tons, only three of 900, and only three of 800, while considerably more than a half did not attain the 500 tons' standard. It is curious, if we may touch on a much less important matter in passing, to note the change of fashion in the names of men-of-war at different epochs. In the early ages they were very generally called after saints, such as St. Thomas and St. Edward, and once we are startled by reading under the Plantagenets of "the *Holy Ghost* of Sandwich." During Elizabeth's reign we hear of the *Triumph*, the *Garland*, the *Snake*, and many fancy names. It was later that Lords of the Admiralty brought their Eton and Westminster recollections to bear, and gave us the *Bellerophon*, the *Agamemnon*, and the *Orestes*.

The most famous admirals of the seventeenth century were men who entered the service in an irregular manner, and whose history shows us how little its organization was definite. Sir William Penn was the son of a captain in the Navy, and was well educated; but he began life in the merchant-service, and passed to the command of a ship of war at twenty-three. Blake had been a captain of dragoons, and never went to sea till he was fifty. Batten and Lawson were "tarpaulins" in the strictest sense. During the Civil War, the Navy adhered to the Parliament without losing its respect for the king; and Blake laid down the celebrated *dictum*; that the Navy's proper business was only "to keep foreigners from fouling us," and not to interfere in the internal disputes of the kingdom. It would be too much to say that there has never been any factiousness in our fleets; on the contrary, occasions could be pointed out where the efficiency of a fleet has been distinctly affected by the commander-in-chief's being a Tory or a Whig. But, as a general rule, Blake's idea has been the naval idea; and a feeling of nationality independent of party politics has been the predominant feeling of officers of our marine. The success of Blake under the Commonwealth was a wonderful piece of fortune for those who held the old *military* doctrine about naval commands; and Monk was sent to sea as "general" against the Dutch after the Restoration. For a time during that period, and partly owing to the service on board of the Duke of York, afterwards James II., it was a fashionable thing among the young men of quality to take a turn of duty on salt water. Lord Dorset's celebrated song—"To all you Ladies now on Land,"—finished the night before the great battle in which Opdam fell,—will long preserve the memory of this phase of the social history of the Navy." An entry in "Pepys" shows us the fortunate set of opinion on this subject among the upper class. "To my Lord Crew's to dinner," writes Pepys, "and had very good discourse about having young noblemen and gentlemen to think of going to sea, it being as honourable service as the land war." Pepys himself was put down for "midshipman's pay," during his attendance on

Montague on board the fleet ; but, considering that he devoted his life to the Navy, there is rather a marked deficiency of matter relating to its social life in his *Diary*. The "tips" which he records as made to him by officers receiving appointments, show the abuses that prevailed ; we smile when we find him eating "a calf's head carboned," with a purser who doubtless wished to be in his good graces ; or drinking at the "Flask" with captains, and hearing their yarns about the Algiers pirates ; but the spiteful gossip which he puts on record about Admiral Penn is dishonourable to his memory.

The gradations of rank were still unfixed, and continued so into the last century. The famous Benbow, for instance, was appointed to command a ship in 1689, without ever having been in the king's service before ; and after being captain was appointed master of the flag-ship. There are repeated precedents, Charnock tells us, of officers who had been captains going to the flag-ship as masters. A distinguished contemporary of Benbow's—Sancock—rose from being a boatswain, and the famous Sir Cloudeasley Shovel began his career as a cabin-boy at nine years of age. But on the other hand, Rooke, and Russell, the Byngs, and others, were men of family ; and as we have said before, it was this variety of condition in naval officers which gave not only strength but picturesqueness to the profession. There was an emulation between the men "who came in at the hawse-holes," and the men "who came in at the cabin windows," which made both classes do their best. Meanwhile, as the service increased in force and importance, it became more than ever a special service to which men required to be peculiarly bred, and thus, by isolating it from the world, preserved in it that singular, original, and humorous character which it bore in the days of Smollett, who went to sea in 1741. There is an anecdote of his contemporary, Admiral Vernon, which quite bears out the sketches in *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle*. When Vernon commanded in the West Indies, a Sir William Burnaby, who was fond of fine clothes, went out to the station in charge of a bomb. The moment the admiral saw the splendid appearance of this gentleman, who had come to report himself to him, he ran into an inner room, and came out wearing a grand wig. Sir William having announced that he had the honour to command the bomb so-and-so, the admiral exclaimed—"Gad so, sir, I took you for a dancing-master !" This was exactly the manner of a great many of what were called "the old school," down even to our own day. Sir Charles Napier was, perhaps, the last of them ; the last of the men who thought a certain boorishness an essential part of the naval character. What they were like in their prime, we may see in Smollett's portrait of Commander Truncheon, who went tacking up a road on horseback, because there was a foul wind ; who interlarded his sentences with "d'ye see's" and stray oaths alternately, and who could not live without a quid in his mouth and a can of flip handy. There are people who think that this was the predominant type of the naval officer during the last century. And a very prominent influential type it certainly was ; a type no doubt comprising many brave and useful seamen. Yet there was

also another class to which the very highest men belonged—a class who were not worse sailors, and yet were much better gentlemen. Just as there were Howards and Monsons in the Navy of Queen Elizabeth, so there were Rodneys and Collingwoods in the Navy of George III. The fact is that in talking of “the old school” we are apt to forget that there was more than one old school. In the days when the present writer was in the Navy, “the old school” *par excellence* comprised all the rough and savage men—those who thought that roughness and savageness were good things in themselves; and that every sort of refinement weakened the essential virtue of the profession. In those days there were still one or two Trafalgar men—though they were very few—in command of ships; and there were officers scattered through the Navy who quite remembered that generation—and what traditions we used to hear! A mate of “the old school,” as it was called, sometimes broke a seaman’s jaw-bone by way of chastisement. When called away from his grog for a moment by any accident, he has been known to spit in it, that nobody might drink it in his absence. The humble crockery of a midshipman’s mess having been broken during action, the captain, on some question of its being replaced, asked who the devil had ever heard of midshipmen having plates? All duty was carried on to a brisk accompaniment of cursing and swearing; and abuse of the ship’s company during work was cultivated by some officers as an art. There were fellows who had, so to speak, graduated in Billingsgate, and whose vituperation excited the envy of mere amateurs. Ignorant, noisy, blasphemous and coarse, these people fancied that they were the true representatives of our naval traditions, and that they deduced their pedigrees through Benbow from the heroes of the old time. But though, when fighting and seamanahip were in question, they acquitted themselves well beyond doubt, yet, when higher qualities in addition to them were required, they were at fault. Their vocation was to do the *rough* work under higher men; and it will be found on inquiry that not the “hawse-holers,” but officers of better social stamp, did the *great* work—that for which a governing and organizing talent on a great scale was necessary. Rodney, Howe, Jervis, Nelson and Collingwood were all gentlemen; and most of them were of better attainments and education, as well as of better manners, than the ruck of less-known sea-officers. Rodney was a couple of years at Harrow before entering the Navy, and was not only a high-bred man, but a man of some literary acquirement. As for Collingwood, he wrote better English and knew more history than three-fourths of those who belong to what are called “the learned professions.” He was the very ideal of a modern naval officer, and could do everything from managing a fleet, or negotiating with a foreign sovereign, to splicing a rope; while his letters are as pleasant reading as those of Cowper or Gray.

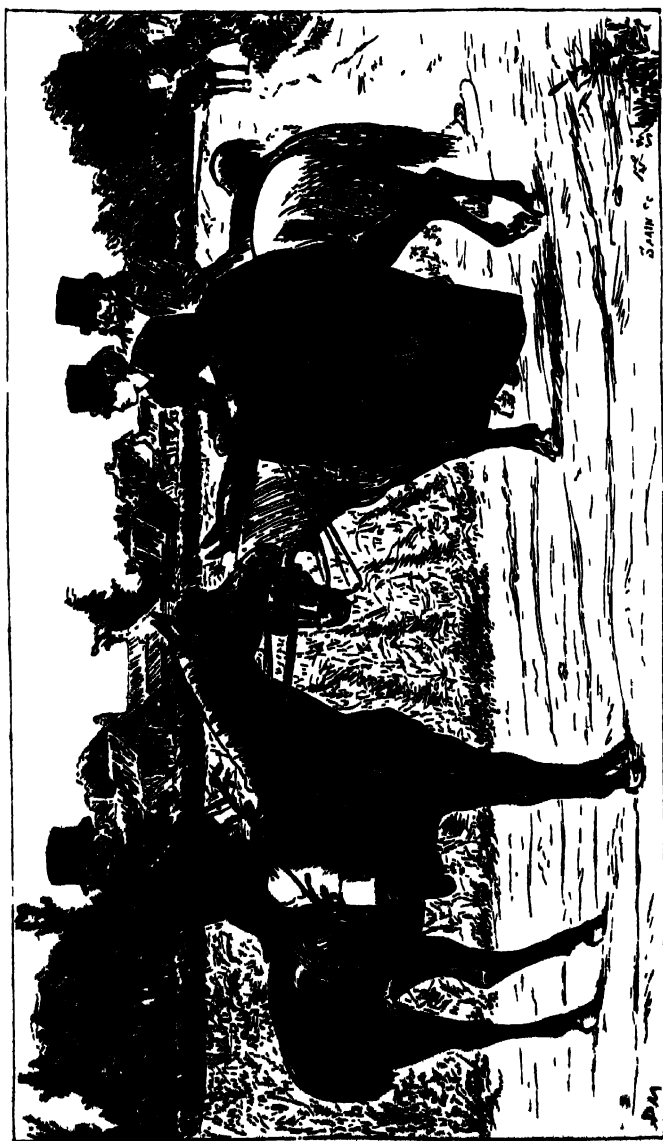
It is indeed a great pity that Captain Marryatt, who knew the service so well, and lived just in time to paint the portraits of the survivors of Collingwood’s generation, should have devoted most of his labour to what we may call the second-best old school. He was essentially a humourist;

fools and tyrants attracted him by their piquancy as good subjects; and though not altogether neglecting the nobler side of the naval character, he never sufficiently laboured to set it forth. What a portrait, at once with the charm of dignity and of quaint old-fashioned simplicity, might be made, by a competent hand, of Lord Collingwood! Under his graver aspect, we have in him an officer of unwearied diligence in his duty, spending hours of every day over his desk, and hours of every night on deck. Did a vessel get out of her station in the darkest hour of the middle watch, he would signal in the morning for the lieutenant whose watch it had happened in, and, simply telling him that he had been sorry to observe it, sent him away impressed as he would "never have been impressed by the oburgation of a ruffian or a bully. For an action, the fine old gentleman dressed himself as he would have done for a ball; and during the hottest part of Trafalgar he was seen munching an apple on the poop, as coolly as if he had been in an orchard. The tenderest of mortals in his domestic relations, he turned round to the admiral at ten o'clock in the morning of the 1st of June, and observed that "about that time their wives were going to church;" just as he had carefully noted that they first sighted the French fleet on "little Sarah's birthday." And along with a certain sensitive pride and old-fashioned courtesy which belonged to him, he combined the homeliest simplicity of life and habits. When he gave a dinner to his captains, he sure that the old Collingwood crest—a stag or colin—was on the silver, and that he would turn round and bow to each guest—"Your health, Sir Chaloner Ogle; your health, Captain ——"—with the first glass of wine. But at no such dinner was the simple nautical soup—pea-soup with slices of pork in it—ever wanting; and he thought brown sugar good enough for the best gentleman. There is a story of his winding up his advice to a lieutenant, whom he was detaching on a separate command, by saying—"and take care, sir, to keep your tea and sugar locked up." And we remember hearing from one who had sailed under him, that on fine days he used himself to hang out his best clothes over his cabin port-holes, that they might get a good airing. Such was Nelson's "dear Coll," to whom Nelson wrote:—"God bless you, and send you alongside the *Santissima Trinidad*," in perfect confidence of what the result of such a meeting would be. He was, indeed, of the "old school;" though how different from many who made the same boast; who esteemed a pen contemptible because it was not a marlinspike; who, to avoid dandyism, rushed into dirt; and drank more rum-and-water than they could carry, rather than stoop to the effeminacy of Hermitage or Lafitte. Specimens of this last peculiar breed lasted far into our time, and had the credit of supplying much amusement to younger men; but the decay of their school was marked early in the century, and did not escape the observation of Sir Walter Scott. In his interesting *Memoir of Smollett*, after some remarks on his naval characters, Sir Walter goes on:—"These striking portraits have now the merit which is cherished by antiquaries—they preserve the memory of the school of Benbow and Boscawen, whose manners are now banished from the quarterdeck to

the present day, the equivalent of which has been thrown into the shadow of a thousand years. These new affect the manners of a foreman-man, and have shown how well their duty can be discharged without any particular regard to tobacco or flip, or the decided preference of a check shirt to a white one."

Since Scott's time, the change of course has gone steadily on in the same direction, and has produced here and there follies of a new kind, which have kept the different follies of the sham Banbows in countenance. The great characteristic of modern naval life is that it is no longer separated from the life of the rest of the world, as it used to be. An admiral no longer asks for his carriage, he is brought round to the door by telling the servant to man the boat. The Navy reads and dances, and has opinions on Dickens and crinoline. We have known a naval instructor who was a better classical scholar than most bishops, and have heard him walk through the text of the *Phædo*, in a cabin on the orlop-deck, in a style that could not have been surpassed by a college tutor. What with steam, and circle-sailing, and improved gunnery, naval officers must be far more carefully educated than they used to be; and while the theory of the ship is that everything ought to be open to everybody, the practice, as far as the Navy is concerned, is that nobody need hope to get a son in who cannot prepare him by a careful training.

Such changes of title as that from "mate" to "sub-lieutenant" look insignificant, but they symbolize the great change by which the merely practical element has been superseded, and a more laborious and scientific kind of education made necessary. We are in a period when courage and wisdom are as important as they ever were; but also when both must be at least aided, relatively, without culture, than they ever were. Hence the pains taken about training-ships and examinations, and the passing of men through ordeals of that way which were quite unknown twenty years back. By abolishing the grade of master, the Admiralty show that they have great confidence in the new generation of lieutenants. For, the necessity of the master—after he had ceased, by the change which made the ship's business a game, to be the most important seaman in the ship, and to take the chief charge of the navigation, and this is now to be left to lieutenants. There will be navigation-lieutenants, as there are gun-lieutenants, which implies a large number of scientifically-trained men. But just now we are rather concerned with the historical significance of the change, which we have experienced as having, by the abolition of a series of positions very little known.



LADY HARRIET ASKS ONE OR TWO QUESTIONS

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER, 1865.

Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER XLVI

HOLLINGFORD GOSSIPS.



Y dear Molly, why didn't you come and dine with us? I said to sister I would come and scold you well. Oh, Mr. Osborne Hamley, is that you?" and a look of mistaken intelligence at the tête-à-tête she had disturbed came so perceptibly over Miss Phoebe's face that Molly caught Osborne's sympathetic eye, and both smiled at the notion.

"I'm sure I—well! one must sometimes—I see our dinner would have been—" Then she recovered herself into a connected sentence. "We only just heard of Mrs. Gilman's having a fly from the 'George,' because sister sent our Betty to pay for a couple of rabbits Tom Oatler had snared, (I hope we shan't be taken up for poachers, Mr. Osborne—

snaring doesn't require a licence, I believe?) and she heard he was gone off with the fly to the Towers with your dear mamma; for, ~~she~~ ^{she} drives the fly in general has sprained his ankle. We had just finished dinner, but when Betty said Tom Oatler would not be back all night I said, 'Why, there's that poor dear girl let all alone by her husband and

mother such a friend of ours,'—when she was alive, I mean. But I'm sure I'm glad I'm mistaken."

Osborne said,—“I came to speak to Mr. Gibson, not knowing he had gone to London, and Miss Gibson kindly gave me some of her lunch. I must go now.”

“O dear! I am so sorry,” fluttered out Miss Phoebe, “I disturbed you; but it was with the best intentions. I always was mal-à-propos from a child.” But Osborne was gone before she had finished her apologies. Before he left, his eyes met Molly’s with a strange look of yearning farewell that struck her at the time, and that she remembered strongly afterwards. “Such a nice suitable thing, and I came in the midst, and spoilt it all. I am sure you’re very kind, my dear, considering—”

“Considering what, my dear Miss Phoebe? If you are conjecturing a love affair between Mr. Osborne Hamley and me, you never were more mistaken in your life. I think I told you so once before. Please do believe me.”

“Oh, yes! I remember. And somehow sister got it into her head it was Mr. Preston. I recollect.”

“One guess is just as wrong as the other,” said Molly, smiling, and trying to look perfectly indifferent, but going extremely red from annoyance at the mention of Mr. Preston’s name. It was very difficult for her to keep up any conversation, for her heart was full of Osborne—his changed appearance, his melancholy words of foreboding, and his confidences about his wife—French, Catholic, servant. Molly could not help trying to piece these strange facts together by imaginations of her own, and found it very hard work to attend to kind Miss Phoebe’s unceasing patter. She came up to the point, however, when the voice ceased; and could recall, in a mechanical manner, the echo of the last words, which from both Miss Phoebe’s look, and the dying accent that lingered in Molly’s ear, she perceived to be a question. Miss Phoebe was asking her if she would go out with her? She was going to Grinstead’s, the bookseller of Hollingford; who, in addition to his regular business, was the agent for the Hollingford Book Society, received their subscriptions, kept their accounts, ordered their books from London, and, on payment of a small salary, allowed the Society to keep their volumes on shelves in his shop. It was the centre of news, and the club, as it were, of the little town. Everybody who pretended to gentility in the place belonged to it. It was a test of gentility, indeed, rather than of education or a love of literature. No shopkeeper would have thought of offering himself as a member, however great his general intelligence and love of reading; while it boasted upon the list of subscribers most of the county families in the neighbourhood, some of whom subscribed to the Hollingford Book Society as a sort of duty belonging to their station, without often using their privilege of reading the books: while there were residents in the little town, such as Mrs. Goodenough, who privately thought reading a great waste of time, that might be much better employed in sewing, and knit-

ting, and pastry-making, but who nevertheless belonged to it as a mark of station, just as these good, motherly women would have thought it a terrible come-down in the world if they had not had a pretty young servant-maid to fetch them home from the tea-parties at night. At any rate, Grinstead's was a very convenient place for a lounge. In that view of the book society every one agreed. Molly went upstairs to get ready to accompany Miss Phœbe; and on opening one of her drawers she saw Cynthia's envelope, containing the notes she owed to Mr. Preston, carefully sealed up like a letter. This was what Molly had so unwillingly promised to deliver—the last final stroke to the affair. Molly took it up, hating it. For a time she had forgotten it; and now it was here, facing her, and she must try and get rid of it. She put it into her pocket for the chances of the walk and the day, and fortune for once seemed to befriend her; for, on their entering Grinstead's shop, in which two or three people were now, as always, congregated, making play of examining the books, or business of writing down the titles of new works in the order-book, there was Mr. Preston. He bowed as they came in. He could not help that; but, at the sight of Molly, he looked as ill-tempered and out of humour as a man well could do. She was connected in his mind with defeat and mortification; and besides, the sight of her called up what he desired now above all things to forget; namely, the deep conviction received through Molly's simple earnestness, of Cynthia's dislike to him. If Miss Phœbe had seen the scowl upon his handsome face, she might have undeceived her sister in her suppositions about him and Molly. But Miss Phœbe, who did not consider it quite maidenly to go and stand close to Mr. Preston, and survey the shelves of books in such close proximity to a gentleman, found herself an errand at the other end of the shop, and occupied herself in buying writing-paper. Molly fingered her valuable letter, as it lay in her pocket; did she dare to cross over to Mr. Preston, and give it to him, or not? While she was still undecided, shrinking always just at the moment when she thought she had got her courage up for action, Miss Phœbe, having finished her purchase, turned round, and after looking a little pathetically at Mr. Preston's back, said to Molly in a whisper—"I think we'll go to Johnson's now, and come back for the books in a little while." So across the street to Johnson's they went; but no sooner had they entered the draper's shop, than Molly's conscience smote her for her cowardice, and loss of a good opportunity. "I'll be back directly," said she, as soon as Miss Phœbe was engaged with her purchases; and Molly ran across to Grinstead's, without looking either to the right or the left; she had been watching the door, and she knew that no Mr. Preston had issued forth. She ran in; he was at the counter now, talking to Grinstead himself; Molly put the letter into his hand, to his surprise, and almost against his will, and turned round to go back to Miss Phœbe. At the door of the shop stood Mrs. Gudgeon, arrested in the act of entering, staring, with her round eyes, made

still rounder and more owl-like by spectacles, to see Molly Gibson giving Mr. Preston a letter, which he, conscious of being watched, and favouring underhand practices habitually, put quickly into his pocket, unopened. Perhaps, if he had had time for reflection he would not have scrupled to put Molly to open shame, by rejecting what she so eagerly forced upon him.

There was another long evening to be got through with Mrs. Gibson; but on this occasion there was the pleasant occupation of dinner, which took up at least an hour; for it was one of Mrs. Gibson's fancies—one which Molly chafed against—to have every ceremonial gone through in the same stately manner for two as for twenty. So, although Molly knew full well, and her stepmother knew full well, and Maria knew full well, that neither Mrs. Gibson nor Molly touched dessert, it was set on the table with as much form as if Cynthia had been at home, who delighted in almonds and raisins; or Mr. Gibson been there, who never could resist dates, although he always protested against "persons in their station of life having a formal dessert set out before them every day."

And Mrs. Gibson herself apologized as it were to Molly to-day, in the same words she had often used to Mr. Gibson,—“It's no extravagance, for we need not eat it—I never do. But it looks well, and makes Maria understand what is required in the daily life of every family of position.”

All through the evening Molly's thoughts wandered far and wide, though she managed to keep up a show of attention to what Mrs. Gibson was saying. She was thinking of Osborne, and his abrupt, half-finished confidence, his ill-looks; she was wondering when Roger would come home, and longing for his return, as much (she said to herself) for Osborne's sake as for her own. And then she checked herself. What had she to do with Roger? Why should she long for his return? It was Cynthia who was doing this; only somehow he was such a true friend to Molly, that she could not help thinking of him as a staff and a stay in the troublous times which appeared to lie not far ahead—this evening. Then Mr. Preston and her little adventure with him came uppermost. How angry he looked! How could Cynthia have liked him even enough to get into this abominable scrape, which was, however, all over now! And so she ran on in her fancies and imaginations, little dreaming that that very night much talk was going on not half-a-mile from where she sat sewing, that could prove that the “scrape” (as she called it, in her girlish phraseology) was not all over.

Scandal sleeps in the summer, comparatively speaking. Its nature is the reverse of that of the dormouse. Warm ambient air, loiterings abroad, gardenings, flowers to talk about, and preserves to make, soothed the wicked imp to slumber in the parish of Hollingford in summer-time. But when evenings grew short, and people gathered round the fires, and put their feet in a circle—not on the fenders, that was not allowed—then was the time for confidential conversation! Or in the pauses allowed for the tea-trays to circulate among the card-tables—when those who were

peaceably inclined tried to stop the warm discussions about "the odd trick," and the rather wearisome feminine way of "shouldering the crutch, and showing how fields were won"—small crumbs and scraps of daily news came up to the surface, such as "Martindale has raised the price of his best joints a halfpenny in the pound;" or "it's a shame of Sir Harry to order in another book on farriery into the book society; Phoebe and I tried to read it, but really there is no general interest in it;" or, "I wonder what Mr. Ashton will do, now Nancy is going to be married! Why, she has been with him these seventeen years! It's a very foolish thing for a woman of her age to be thinking of matrimony; and so I told her, when I met her in the market-place this morning!"

So said Miss Browning on the night in question; her hand of cards lying by her on the puce baize-covered table, while she munched the rich pound-cake of a certain Mrs. Dawes, lately come to inhabit Hollingford.

"Matrimony's not so bad as you think for, Miss Browning," said Mrs. Goodenough, standing up for the holy estate into which she had twice entered. "If I had ha' seer Nancy, I should ha' given her my mind very different. It's a great thing to be able to settle what you'll have for dinner, without never a one interfering with you."

"If that's all!" said Miss Browning, drawing herself up, "I can do that; and, perhaps, better than a woman who has a husband to please."

"No one can say as I didn't please my husbands—both on 'em, though Jeremy was tickler in his tastes than poor Harry Beaver. But as I used to say to 'em, 'Leave the victuals to me; it's better for you than knowing what's to come beforehand. The stomach likes to be taken by surprise.' And neither of 'em ever repented 'em of their confidence. You may take my word for it, beans and bacon will taste better (and Mr. Ashton's Nancy in her own house) than all the sweetbreads and spring chickens she's been a-doing for him this seventeen years. But if I chose I could tell you of something as would interest you all a deal more than old Nancy's marriage to a widower with nine children—only as the young folks themselves is meeting in private, clandestine-like, it's perhaps not for me to tell their secrets."

"I'm sure I don't want to hear of clandestine meetings between young men and young women," said Miss Browning, throwing up her head. "It's disgrace enough to the people themselves, I consider, if they enter on a love affair without the proper sanction of parents. I know public opinion has changed on the subject; but when poor Gratia was married to Mr. Byerley, he wrote to my father without ever having so much as paid her a compliment, or said more than the most trivial and commonplace things to her; and my father and mother sent for her into my father's study, and she said she never was so much frightened in her life,—and they said it was a very good offer, and Mr. Byerley was a very worthy man, and they hoped she would behave properly to him when he came to supper that night. And after that he was allowed to come twice a week

till they were married. My mother and I sat at our work in the bow-window of the Rectory drawing-room, and Gratia and Mr. Byerley at the other end; and my mother always called my attention to some flower or plant in the garden when it struck nine, for that was his time for going. Without offence to the present company, I am rather inclined to look upon matrimony as a weakness to which some very worthy people are prone; but if they must be married, let them make the best of it, and go through the affair with dignity and propriety; or if there are misdoings and clandestine meetings, and such things, at any rate, never let me hear about them! I think it's you to play, Mrs. Dawes. You'll excuse my frankness on the subject of matrimony! Mrs. Goodenough there can tell you I'm a very out-spoken person."

"It's not the out-speaking, it's what you say that goes against me, Miss Browning," said Mrs. Goodenough, affronted, yet ready to play her card as soon as needed. And as for Mrs. Dawes, she was too anxious to get into the genteelst of all (Hollingford) society to object to whatever Miss Browning (who, in right of being a deceased rector's daughter, rather represented the selectest circle of the little town) advocated, celibacy, marriage, bigamy, or polygamy.

So the remainder of the evening passed over without any farther reference to the secret Mrs. Goodenough was burning to disclose, unless a remark made *à propos de rien* by Miss Browning, during the silence of a deal, could be supposed to have connexion with the previous conversation. She said suddenly and abruptly,—

"I don't know what I have done that any man should make me his slave." If she was referring to any prospect of matrimonial danger she saw opening before her fancy, she might have been comforted. But it was a remark of which no one took any notice, all being far too much engaged in the rubber. Only when Miss Browning took her early leave (for Miss Phoebe had a cold, and was an invalid at home), Mrs. Goodenough burst out with—

"Well! now I may speak out my mind, and say as how if there was a slave between us two, when Goodenough was alive, it wasn't me; and I don't think as it was pretty in Miss Browning to give herself such airs on her virginity when there was four widows in the room,—who've had six honest men among 'em for husbands. No offence, Miss Airy!" addressing an unfortunate little spinster, who found herself the sole representative of celibacy now that Miss Browning was gone. "I could tell her of a girl as she's very fond on, who's on the high road to matrimony; and in as cunning a way as ever I heard on; going out at dusk to meet her sweetheart, just as if she was my Betty, or your Jenny. And her name is Molly too,—which, as I have often thought, shows a low taste in them as first called her so; she might as well be a scullery-maid at sunset. Not that she's picked up anybody common; she's looked about her for a handsome fellow, and a smart young man enough!"

Every one around the table looked curious and intent on the

disclosures being made, except the hostess, Mrs. Dawes, who smiled intelligence with her eyes, and knowingly pursed up her mouth until Mrs. Goodenough had finished her tale. Then she said demurely :

"I suppose you mean Mr. Preston and Miss Gibson?"

"Why, who told you?" said Mrs. Goodenough, turning round upon her in surprise. "You can't say as I did. There's many a Molly in Hollingford, besides her,—though none, perhaps, in such a genteel station in life. I never named her, I'm sure."

"No! But I know. I could tell my tale too," continued Mrs. Dawes.

"No! could you, really?" said Mrs. Goodenough, very curious and a little jealous.

"Yes. My uncle Sheepshanks came upon them in the Park Avenue,—he startled 'em a good deal, he said; and when he taxed Mr. Preston with being with his sweetheart, he didn't deny it."

"Well! Now so much has come out, I'll tell you what I know. Only, ladies, I wouldn't wish to do the girl an unkind turn,—so you must keep what I've got to tell you a secret." Of course they promised; that was easy.

"My Hannah as married Tom Oakes, and lives in Pearson's Lane, was a-gathering of damsons only about a week ago, and Molly Gibson was a-walking fast down the lane,—quite in a hurry like to meet some one,—and Hannah's little Anna-Maria fell down, and Molly (who's a kind-hearted lass enough) picked her up; so if Hannah had had her doubts before, she had none then."

"But there was no one with her, was there?" asked one of the ladies anxiously, as Mrs. Goodenough stopped to finish her piece of cake, just at this crisis.

"No: I said she looked as if she was going to meet some one,—and by-and-by comes Mr. Preston running out of the wood just beyond Hannah's, and says he, 'A cup of water, please, good woman, for a lady has fainted, or is 'sterical or something.' Now though he didn't know Hannah, Hannah knew him. 'More folks know Tom Fool, than Tom Fool knows,' asking Mr. Preston's pardon; for he's no fool whatever he be. And I could tell you more,—and what I've seed with my own eyes. I seed her give him a letter in Grinstead's shop, only yesterday, and he looked as black as thunder at her, for he seed me if she didn't."

"It's a very suitable kind of thing," said Miss Airy; "why do they make such a mystery of it?"

"Some folks like it," said Mrs. Dawes; "it adds zest to it all, to do their courting underhand."

"Ay, it's like salt to their victual," put in Mrs. Goodenough. "But I didn't think Molly Gibson was one of that sort, I didn't."

"The Gibsons hold themselves very high?" cried Mrs. Dawes, more as an inquiry than an assertion. "Mrs. Gibson has called upon me."

"Ay, you're like to be a patient of the doctor's," put in Mrs. Goodenough.

"She seemed to me very affable, though she is so intimate with the Countess and the family at the Towers; and is quite the lady herself; dines late, I've heard, and everything in style."

"Style! very different style to what Bob Gibson, her husband, was used to when first he came here,—glad of a mutton-chop in his surgery, for I doubt if he'd a fire anywhere else; we called him Bob Gibson then, but none on us dare Bob him now; I'd as soon think o' calling him sweep!"

"I think it looks very bad for Miss Gibson!" said one lady, rather anxious to bring back the conversation to the more interesting present time. But as soon as Mrs. Goodenough heard this natural comment on the disclosures she had made, she fired round on the speaker.

"Not at all bad, and I'll trouble you not to use such a word as that about Molly Gibson, as I've known all her life. It's odd, if you will. I was odd myself as a girl; I never could abide a plate of gathered gooseberries, but I must needs go and skulk behind a bush and gather 'em for myself. It's some folk's taste, though it mayn't be Miss Browning's, who'd have all the courting done under the nose of the family. All as ever I said was that I was surprised at it in Molly Gibson; and that I'd ha' thought it was liker that pretty piece of a Cynthia as they call her; indeed at one time I was ready to swear as it was her Mr. Preston was after. And now, ladies, I'll wish you a very good night. I cannot abide waste; and I'll venture for it Hetty's letting the candle in the lantern run all to grease, instead of putting it out, as I've told her to do, if ever she's got to wait for me."

So with formal dipping curtses the ladies separated, but not without thanking Mrs. Dawes for the pleasant evening they had had; a piece of old-fashioned courtesy always gone through in those days.

CHAPTER XLVII.

SCANDAL AND ITS VICTIMS.

WHEN Mr. Gibson returned to Hollingsford, he found an accumulation of business waiting for him, and he was much inclined to complain of the consequences of the two days' comparative holiday, which had resulted in over-work for the week to come. He had hardly time to speak to his family, he had so immediately to rush off to pressing cases of illness. But Molly managed to arrest him in the hall, standing there with his great coat held out ready for him to put on, but whispering as she did so—

"Papa! Mr. Osborne Hamley was here to see you yesterday. He looks very ill, and he's evidently frightened about himself."

Mr. Gibson faced about, and looked at her for a moment; but all he said was—

"I'll go and see him; don't tell your mother where I'm gone: you've not mentioned this to her, I hope?"

"No," said Molly, for she had only told Mrs. Gibson of Osborne's call, not of the occasion for it.

"Don't say anything about it: there's no need. Now I think of it, I can't possibly go to-day,—but I will go."

Something in her father's manner disheartened Molly, who had persuaded herself that Osborne's evident illness was partly "nervous," by which she meant imaginary. She had dwelt upon his looks of enjoyment at Miss Phœbe's perplexity, and thought that no one really believing himself to be in danger could have given the merry glances which he had done; but after seeing the seriousness of her father's face, she resorted to the shock she had experienced on first seeing Osborne's changed appearance. All this time Mrs. Gibson was busy reading a letter from Cynthia which Mr. Gibson had brought from London; for every opportunity of private conveyance was seized upon when postage was so high; and Cynthia had forgotten so many things in her hurried packing, that she now sent a list of the clothes which she required. Molly almost wondered that it had not come to her; but she did not understand the sort of reserve that was springing up in Cynthia's mind towards her. Cynthia herself struggled with the feeling, and tried to fight against it by calling herself "ungrateful," but the truth was she believed that she no longer held her former high place in Molly's estimation and she could not help turning away from one who knew things to her discredit. She was fully aware of Molly's prompt decision and willing action, where action was especially disagreeable, on her behalf; she knew that Molly would never bring up the past errors and difficulties; but still the consciousness that the good, straightforward girl had learnt that Cynthia had been guilty of so much underhand work cooled her regard, and restrained her willingness of intercourse. Reproach herself with ingratitude as she would, she could not help feeling glad to be away from Molly; it was awkward to speak to her as if nothing had happened; it was awkward to write to her about forgotten ribbons and laces, when their last conversation had been on such different subjects, and had called out such vehement expressions of feeling. So Mrs. Gibson held the list in her hand, and read out the small fragments of news that were intermixed with notices of Cynthia's requirements.

"Helen cannot be so very ill," said Molly at length, "or Cyn would not want her pink mualin and daisy wreath."

"I don't see that that follows, I'm sure," replied Mrs. Gibson rather sharply. "Helen would never be so selfish as to tie Cynthia to her side, however ill she was. Indeed, I should not have felt that it was my duty to let Cynthia go to London at all, if I had thought she was to be perpetually exposed to the depressing atmosphere of a sick-room. Besides, it must be so good for Helen to have Cynthia coming in with bright pleasant accounts of the parties she has been to—even if Cynthia disliked gaiety I should desire her to sacrifice herself and go out as much as she could, for Helen's sake. My idea of nursing

is that one should not be always thinking of one's own feelings and wishes, but doing those things which will most serve to beguile the weary hours of an invalid. But then so few people have had to consider the subject so deeply as I have done!" Mrs. Gibson here thought fit to sigh before going on with Cynthia's letter. As far as Molly could make any sense out of this rather incoherent epistle, very incoherently read aloud to her, Cynthia was really pleased, and glad to be of use and comfort to Helen, but at the same time very ready to be easily persuaded into the perpetual small gaieties which abounded in her uncle's house in London, even at this dead season of the year. Mrs. Gibson came upon Mr. Henderson's name once, and then went on with a running um-um-um to herself, which sounded very mysterious, but which might as well have been omitted, as all that Cynthia really said about him was, "Mr. Henderson's mother has advised my aunt to consult a certain Dr. Donaldson, who is said to be very clever in such cases as Helen's, but my uncle is not sufficiently sure of the professional etiquette, &c." Then there came a very affectionate, carefully worded message to Molly,—implying a good deal more than was said of loving gratitude for the trouble she had taken in Cynthia's behalf. And that was all; and Molly went away a little depressed; she knew not why.

The operation on Lady Cumnor had been successfully performed, and in a few days they hoped to bring her down to the Towers to recruit her strength in the fresh country air; the case was one which interested Mr. Gibson extremely, and in which his opinion had been proved to be right, in opposition to that of one or two great names in London. The consequence was that he was frequently consulted and referred to during the progress of her recovery; and, as he had much to do in the immediate circle of his Hollingford practice, as well as to write thoughtful letters to his medical brethren in London, he found it difficult to spare the three or four hours necessary to go over to Hamley to see Osborne. He wrote to him, however, begging him to reply immediately and detail his symptoms; and from the answer he received he did not imagine that the case was immediately pressing. Osborne, too, deprecated his coming over to Hamley for the express purpose of seeing him. So the visit was deferred to that more convenient season which is so often too late.

All these days the buzzing gossip about Molly's meetings with Mr. Preston, her clandestine correspondence, the tête-à-tête interviews in lonely places, had been gathering strength, and assuming the positive form of scandal. The simple innocent girl, who walked through the quiet streets without a thought of being the object of mysterious implications, became for a time the unconscious black sheep of the town. Servants heard part of what was said in their mistresses' drawing-rooms, and exaggerated the sayings amongst themselves with the coarse strengthening of expression common amongst uneducated people. Mr. Preston himself became aware that her name was being coupled with his, though hardly to the extent to which the love of excitement and gossip had carried

people's speeches; he chuckled over the mistake, but took no pains to correct it. "It serves her right," said he to himself, "for meddling with other folk's business," and he felt himself avenged for the discomfiture which her menace of appealing to Lady Harriet had caused him, and the mortification he had experienced in learning from her plain-speaking lips, how he had been talked over by Cynthia and herself, with personal dislike on the one side, and evident contempt on the other. Besides, if any denial of Mr. Preston's stirred up an examination as to the real truth, more might come out of his baffled endeavours to compel Cynthia to keep to her engagement to him than he cared to have known. He was angry with himself for still loving Cynthia; loving her in his own fashion, be it understood. He told himself that many a woman of more position and wealth would be glad enough to have him; some of them pretty women too. And he asked himself why he was such a confounded fool as to go on hankering after a penniless girl, who was as fickle as the wind? The answer was silly enough, logically; but forcible in fact. Cynthia was Cynthia, and not Venus herself could have been her substitute. In this one thing Mr. Preston was more really true than many worthy men; who, seeking to be married, turn with careless facility from the unattainable to the attainable, and keep their feelings and fancy tolerably loose till they find a woman who consents to be their wife. But no one would ever be to Mr. Preston what Cynthia had been, and was; and yet he could have stabbed her in certain of his moods. So, Molly, who had come between him and the object of his desire, was not likely to find favour in his sight, or to obtain friendly actions from him.

There came a time—not very distant from the evening at Mrs. Dawes'—when Molly felt that people looked askance at her. Mrs. Goodenough openly pulled her grand-daughter away, when the young girl stopped to speak to Molly in the street, and an engagement which the two had made for a long walk together was cut very short by a very trumpery excuse. Mrs. Goodenough explained her conduct in the following manner to some of her friends:—

"You see, I don't think the worse of a girl for meeting her sweetheart here and there and everywhere, till she gets talked about; but then when she does—and Molly Gibson's name is in everybody's mouth—I think it's only fair to Bessy, who has trusted me with Annabella, not to let her daughter be seen with a lass who has managed her matters so badly, as to set folk talking about her. My maxim is this,—and it's a very good working one, you may depend on't—women should mind what they're about, and never be talked of; and if a woman's talked of, the less her friends have to do with her till the talk has died away, the better. So Annabella had not to have anything to do with Molly Gibson, this visit at any rate."

For a good while the Miss Brownings were kept in ignorance of the evil tongues that whispered hard words about Molly. Miss Browning was known to "have a temper," and by instinct every one who came in contact

with her shrank from irritating that temper by uttering the slightest syllable against the smallest of those creatures over whom she spread the wings of her love. She would and did reproach them herself; she used to boast that she never spared them: but no one else might touch them with the slightest slur of a passing word. But Miss Phœbe inspired no such terror; the great reason why she did not hear of the gossip against Molly as early as any one, was that, although she was not the rose, she lived near the rose. Besides, she was of so tender a nature that even thick-skinned Mrs. Goodenough was unwilling to say what would give Miss Phœbe pain; and it was the new-comer Mrs. Dawes, who in all ignorance alluded to the town's talk, as to something of which Miss Phœbe must be aware. Then Miss Phœbe poured down her questions, although she protested, even with tears, her total disbelief in all the answers she received. It was a small act of heroism on her part to keep all that she there learnt a secret from her sister Dorothy, as she did for four or five days; till Miss Browning attacked her one evening with the following speech:—

"Phœbe! either you've some reason for puffing yourself out with sighs, or you've not. If you have a reason, it's your duty to tell it me directly; and if you've no reason, you must break yourself of a bad habit that is growing upon you."

"Oh, sister! do you think it is really my duty to tell you? it would be such a comfort; but then I thought I ought not; it will distress you so."

"Nonsense. I am so well prepared for misfortune by the frequent contemplation of its possibility that I believe I can receive any ill news with apparent equanimity and real resignation. Besides, when you said yesterday at breakfast-time that you meant to give up the day to making your drawers tidy, I was aware that some misfortune was impending, though of course I could not judge of its magnitude. Is the Highchester Bank broken?"

"Oh no, sister!" said Miss Phœbe, moving to a seat close to her sister's on the sofa. "Have you really been thinking that! I wish I had told you what I heard at the very first, if you've been fancying that!"

"Take warning, Phœbe, and learn to have no concealments from me. I did think we must be ruined, from your ways of going on; eating no meat at dinner, and sighing continually. And now what is it?"

"I hardly know how to tell you, Dorothy. I really don't."

Miss Phœbe began to cry; Miss Browning took hold of her arm, and gave her a little sharp shake.

"Cry as much as you like when you've told me; but don't cry now, child, when you're keeping me on the tenter hooks."

"Molly Gibson has lost her character, sister. That's it."

"Molly Gibson has done no such thing!" said Miss Browning indignantly. "How dare you repeat such stories about poor Mary's child! Never let me hear you say such things again!"

"I can't help it. Mrs. Dawes told me; and she says it's all over the

town. I told her I did not believe a word of it. And I kept it from you; and I think I should have been really ill if I'd kept it to myself any longer. Oh, sister! what are you going to do?"

For Miss Browning had risen without speaking a word, and was leaving the room in a stately and determined fashion.

"I am going to put on my bonnet and things, and then I shall call upon Mrs. Dawes, and confront her with her lies."

"Oh, don't call them lies, sister; it's such a strong, ugly word. Please call them tallydiddles, for I don't believe he meant any harm. Besides,—besides—if they should turn out to be truth! Really, sister, that's the weight on my mind; so many things sounded as if they might be true."

"What things?" said Miss Browning, still standing with judicial erectness of position in the middle of the floor.

"Why—one story was that Molly had given him a letter."

"Who's him? How am I to understand a story told in that silly way?" Miss Browning sat down on the nearest chair, and made up her mind to be patient if she could.

"Him is Mr. Preston. And that must be true; because I missed her from my side when I wanted to ask if she thought blue would look green by candlelight, as the young man said it would, and she had run across the street, and Mrs. Goodenough was just going into the shop, just as she said she was."

Miss Browning's distress was overcoming her anger; so she only said, "Phoebe, I think you'll drive me mad. Do tell me what you heard from Mrs. Dawes in a sensible and coherent manner, for once in your life."

"I'm sure I'm trying with all my might to tell you everything just as it happened."

"What did you hear from Mrs. Dawes?"

"Why, that Molly and Mr. Preston were keeping company just as if she was a maid-servant and he was a gardener; meeting at all sorts of improper times and places, and fainting away in his arms, and out at night together, and writing to each other, and slipping their letters into each other's hands; and that was what I was talking about, sister, for I next door to saw that done once. I saw her with my own eyes run across the street to Grinstead's, where he was, for we had just left him there; with a letter in her hand, too, which was not there when she came back all fluttered and blushing. But I never thought anything of it at the time; but now all the town is talking about it, and crying shame, and saying they ought to be married." Miss Phoebe sank into sobbing again; but was suddenly roused by a good box on her ear. Miss Browning was standing over her almost trembling with passion.

"Phoebe, if ever I hear you say such things again, I'll turn you out of the house that minute."

"I only said what Mrs. Dawes said, and you asked me what it was," replied Miss Phoebe, humbly and meekly. "Dorothy, you should not have done that."

"Never mind whether I should or I shouldn't. That's not the matter in hand. What I've got to decide is how to put a stop to all these lies."

"But, Dorothy, they are not all lies—if you will call them so; I'm afraid some things are true; though I stuck to their being false when Mrs. Dawes told me of them."

"If I go to Mrs. Dawes, and she repeats them to me, I shall slap her face or box her ears I'm afraid, for I couldn't stand tales being told of poor Mary's daughter, as if they were just a stirring piece of news like James Horrock's pig with two heads," said Miss Browning, meditating aloud. "That would do harm instead of good. Phoebe, I'm really sorry I boxed your ears, only I should do it again if you said the same things." Phoebe sat down by her sister, and took hold of one of her withered hands, and began caressing it, which was her way of accepting her sister's expression of regret. "If I speak to Molly, the child will deny it, if she's half as good-for-nothing as they say; and if she's not, she'll only worry herself to death. No, that won't do. Mrs. Goodenough—but she's a donkey; and if I convinced her, she could never convince any one else. No; Mrs. Dawes, who told you, shall tell me, and I'll tie my hands together inside my muff, and bind myself over to keep the peace. And when I've heard what is to be heard, I'll put the matter into Mr. Gibson's hands. That's what I'll do. So it's no use your saying anything against it, Phoebe, for I shan't attend to you."

Miss Browning went to Mrs. Dawes', and began civilly enough to make inquiries about the reports current in Hollingford about Molly and Mr. Preston; and Mrs. Dawes fell into the snare, and told all the real and fictitious circumstances of the story in circulation, quite unaware of the storm that was gathering and ready to fall upon her as soon as she stopped speaking. But she had not the long habit of reverence for Miss Browning which would have kept so many Hollingford ladies from justifying themselves if she found fault. Mrs. Dawes stood up for herself and her own veracity, bringing out fresh scandal, which she said she did not believe, but that many did; and adducing so much evidence as to the truth of what she had said and did believe, that Miss Browning was almost quelled, and sat silent and miserable at the end of Mrs. Dawes' justification of herself.

"Well!" she said at length, rising up from her chair as she spoke, "I'm very sorry I've lived till this day; it's a blow to me just as if I had heard of such goings-on in my own flesh and blood. I suppose I ought to apologise to you, Mrs. Dawes, for what I said; but I've no heart to do it to-day. I ought not to have spoken as I did; but that's nothing to this affair, you see."

"I hope you do me the justice to perceive that I only repeated what I had heard on good authority, Miss Browning," said Mrs. Dawes in reply.

"My dear, don't repeat evil on any authority unless you can do some

good by speaking about it," said Miss Browning, laying her hand on Mrs. Dawes' shoulder. "I'm not a good woman, but I know what is good, and that advice is. And now I think I can tell you that I beg your pardon for flying out upon you so; but God knows what pain you were putting me to. You'll forgive me, won't you, my dear?" Mrs. Dawes felt the hand trembling on her shoulder, and saw the real distress of Miss Browning's mind, so it was not difficult to her to grant the requested forgiveness. Then Miss Browning went home, and said but few words to Phoebe, who indeed saw well enough that her sister had heard the reports confirmed, and needed no further explanation of the cause of scarcely-tasted dinner, and short replies, and saddened looks. Presently Miss Browning sat down and wrote a short note. Then she rang the bell, and told the little maiden who answered it to take it to Mr. Gibson, and if he was out to see that it was given to him as soon as ever he came home. And then she went and put on her Sunday cap; and Miss Phoebe knew that her sister had written to ask Mr. Gibson to come and be told of the rumours affecting his daughter. Miss Browning was sadly disturbed at the information she had received, and the task that lay before her; she was miserably uncomfortable to herself and irritable to Miss Phoebe, and the netting-cotton she was using kept continually snapping and breaking from the jerks of her nervous hands. When the knock at the door was heard,—the well-known doctor's knock,—Miss Browning took off her spectacles, and dropped them on the carpet, breaking them as she did so; and then she bade Miss Phoebe leave the room, as if her presence had cast the evil-eye, and caused the misfortune. She wanted to look natural, and was distressed at forgetting whether she usually received him sitting or standing.

"Well!" said he, coming in cheerfully, and rubbing his cold hands as he went straight to the fire, "and what is the matter with us? It's Phoebe, I suppose. I hope none of those old spasms? But, after all, as does, or two will set that to rights."

"Oh! Mr. Gibson, I wish it was Phoebe, or me either!" said Miss Browning, trembling more and more.

He sat down by her patiently, when he saw her agitation, and took her hand in a kind, friendly manner.

"Don't hurry yourself,—take your time. I daresay it's not so bad as you fancy; but we'll see about it. There's a great deal of help in the world, much as we abuse it."

"Mr. Gibson," said she, "it's your Molly I'm so grieved about. It's out now, and God help us both, and the poor child too, for I'm sure she's been led astray, and not gone wrong by her own free will!"

"Molly!" said he, fighting against her words. "What's my little Molly been doing or saying?"

"Oh! Mr. Gibson, I don't know how to tell you. I ~~never~~ ^{hardly} would have named it, if I had not been convinced, sorely, sorely ~~against~~ ^{for} my will."

"At any rate, you can let me hear what you have heard," said he, putting his elbow on the table, and screening his eyes with his hand. "Not that I am a bit afraid of anything you can hear about my girl," continued he. "Only in this little nest of gossip it's as well to know what people are talking about."

"They say—oh! how shall I tell you?"

"Go on, can't you?" said he, removing his hand from his blazing eyes. "I'm not going to believe it, so don't be afraid!"

"But I fear you must believe it. I would not if I could help it. She's been carrying on a clandestine correspondence with Mr. Preston!"

"Mr. Preston!" exclaimed he.

"And meeting him at all sorts of unseemly places and hours out of doors,—in the dark,—fainting away in his—his arms, if I must speak out. All the town is talking of it." Mr. Gibson's hand was over his eyes again, and he made no sign; so Miss Browning went on, adding touch to touch. "Mr. Sheepshanks saw them together. They have exchanged notes in Grinstead's shop; she ran after him there."

"Be quiet, can't you?" said Mr. Gibson, taking his hand away, and showing his grim set face. "I have heard enough. Don't go on. I said I shouldn't believe it, and I don't. I suppose I must thank you for telling me; but I can't yet."

"I don't want your thanks," said Miss Browning, almost crying. "I thought you ought to know; for though you're married again, I can't forget you were dear Mary's husband once upon a time; and Molly's her child."

"I'd rather not speak any more about it just at present," said he, not at all replying to Miss Browning's last speech. "I may not control myself as I ought. I only wish I could meet Preston, and horsewhip him within an inch of his life. I wish I'd the doctoring of these slanderous gossips. I'd make their tongues lie still for a while. My little girl! What harm has she done them all, that they should go and foul her fair name."

"Indeed, Mr. Gibson, I'm afraid it's all true. I would not have sent for you if I hadn't examined into it. Do ascertain the truth before you do anything violent, such as horsewhipping or poisoning."

With all the *inconsequence* of a man in a passion, Mr. Gibson laughed out, "What have I said about horsewhipping or poisoning? Do you think I'd have Molly's name dragged about the streets in connection with any act of violence on my part. Let the report die away as it arose. Time will prove its falsehood."

"But I don't think it will, and that's the pity of it," said Miss Browning. "You must do something, but I don't know what."

"I shall go home and ask Molly herself what's the meaning of it all; that's all I shall do. It's too ridiculous—knowing Molly as I do, it's perfectly ridiculous." He got up and walked about the room with hasty

steps, laughing short unnatural laughs from time to time. "Really what will they say next? 'Satan finds some mischief still for idle tongues to do.'"

"Don't talk of Satan, please, in this house. No one knows what may happen, if he's lightly spoken about," pleaded Miss Browning.

He went on, without noticing her, talking to himself,—“I've a great mind to leave the place;—and what food for scandal that piece of folly would give rise to!” Then he was silent for a time; his hands in his pockets, his eyes on the ground, as he continued his quarter-deck march. Suddenly he stopped close to Miss Browning's chair. “I'm thoroughly ungrateful to you, for as true a mark of friendship as you've ever shown to me. True or false, it was right I should know the wretched scandal that was being circulated; and it could not have been pleasant for you to tell it me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

“Indeed, Mr. Gibson, if it was false I would never have named it, but let it die away.”

“It's not true though!” said he, doggedly, letting drop the hand he had taken in his effusion of gratitude.

She shook her head. “I shall always love Molly for her mother's sake,” she said. And it was a great concession from the correct Miss Browning. But her father did not understand it as such.

“You ought to love her for her own. She has done nothing to disgrace herself. I shall go straight home, and probe into the truth.”

“As if the poor girl who has been led away into deceit already would scruple much at going on in falsehood,” was Miss Browning's remark on this last speech of Mr. Gibson's; but she had discretion enough not to make it until he was well out of hearing.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

AN INNOCENT CULPRIT.

WITH his head bent down—as if he were facing some keen-blowing wind—and yet there was not a breath of air stirring—Mr. Gibson went swiftly to his own home. He rang at the door-bell; an unusual proceeding on his part. Maria opened the door. “Go and tell Miss Molly she is wanted in the dining-room. Don't say who it is that wants her.” There was something in Mr. Gibson's manner that made Maria obey him to the letter, in spite of Molly's surprised question.

“Wants me? Who is it, Maria?”

Mr. Gibson went into the dining-room, and shut the door, for an instant's solitude. He went up to the chimney-piece, took hold of it, and laid his head on his hands, and tried to still the beating of his heart.

The door opened. He knew that Molly stood there before he heard her tone of astonishment.

“Papa!”

"Hush!" said he, turning round sharply. "Shut the door. Come back."

She came to him, wondering what was amiss. Her thoughts went to the Hamleys immediately. "Is it Osborne?" she asked, breathless. If Mr. Gibson had not been too much agitated to judge calmly, he might have deduced comfort from these three words.

But instead of allowing himself to seek for comfort from collateral evidence, he said,—“Molly, what is this I hear? That you have been keeping up a clandestine intercourse with Mr. Preston—meeting him in out-of-the-way places; exchanging letters with him in a stealthy way.”

Though he had professed to disbelieve all this, and did disbelieve it at the bottom of his soul, his voice was hard and stern, his face was white and grim, and his eyes fixed Molly's with the terrible keenness of their research. Molly trembled all over; but she did not attempt to evade his penetration. If she was silent for a moment, it was because she was rapidly reviewing her relation with regard to Cynthia in the matter. It was but a moment's pause of silence; but it seemed long minutes to one who was craving for a burst of indignant denial. He had taken hold of her two arms just above her wrists, as she had just advanced towards him; he was unconscious of this action; but, as his impatience for her words grew upon him, he grasped her more and more tightly in his vice-like hands, till she made a little involuntary sound of pain. And then he let go; and she looked at her soft bruised flesh, with tears gathering fast to her eyes to think that he, her father, should have hurt her so. At the instant it appeared to her stranger that he should inflict bodily pain upon his child, than that he should have heard the truth—even in an exaggerated form. With a childish gesture she held out her arm to him; but if she expected pity, she received none.

"Pooh!" said he, as he just glanced at the mark, "that is nothing—nothing. Answer my question. Have you—have you met that man in private?"

"Yes, papa, I have; but I don't think it was wrong."

He sat down now. "Wrong!" he echoed, bitterly. "Not wrong? Well! I must bear it somehow. Your mother is dead. That's one comfort. It is true, then, is it? Why, I did not believe it—not I. I laughed in my sleeve at their credulity; and I was the dupe all the time!"

"Papa, I cannot tell you all. It is not my secret, or you should know it directly. Indeed, you will be sorry some time—I have never deceived you yet, have I?" trying to take one of his hands; but he kept them tightly in his pockets, his eyes fixed on the pattern of the carpet before him. "Papa!" said she, pleading again, "have I ever deceived you?"

"How can I tell? I hear of this from the town's talk. I don't know what next may come out!"

"The town's talk," said Molly in dismay. "What business is it of theirs?"

"Every one makes it their business to cast dirt on a girl's name who has disregarded the commonest rules of modesty and propriety."

"Papa, you are very hard. 'Modesty disregarded.' I will tell you exactly what I have done. I met Mr. Preston once,—that evening when you put me down to walk over Croston Heath,—and there was another person with him. I met him a second time—and that time by appointment—nobody but our two selves,—in the Towers' Park. That is all, papa. You must trust me. I cannot explain more. You must trust me indeed."

He could not help relenting at her words; there was such truth in the tone in which they were spoken. But he neither spoke nor stirred for a minute or two. Then he raised his eyes to hers for the first time since she had acknowledged the external truth of what he charged her with. Her face was very white, but it bore the impress of the final sincerity of death, when the true expression prevails without the poor disguises of time.

"The letters?" he said,—but almost as if he were ashamed to question that countenance any further.

"I gave him *one* letter,—of which I did not write a word,—which, in fact, I believe to have been merely an envelope, without any writing whatever inside. The giving that letter,—the two interviews I have named,—make all the private intercourse I have had with Mr. Preston. Oh! papa, what have they been saying that has grieved—shocked you so much?"

"Never mind. As the world goes, what you say you have done, Molly, is ground enough. You must tell me all. I must be able to refute these rumours point by point."

"How are they to be refuted; when you say that the truth which I have acknowledged is ground enough for what people are saying?"

"You say you were not acting for yourself, but for another. If you tell me who the other was,—if you tell me everything out fully, I will do my utmost to screen her—for of course I guess it was Cynthia—while I am exonerating you."

"No, papa!" said Molly, after some little consideration; "I have told you all I can tell; all that concerns myself; and I have promised not to say one word more."

"Then your character will be impugned. It must be,—unless the fullest explanation of these secret meetings are given. I have a great mind to force the whole truth out of Preston himself!"

"Papa! once again I beg you to trust me. If you ask Mr. Preston you will very likely hear the whole truth; but that is just what I have been trying so hard to conceal, for it will only make several people very unhappy if it is known, and the whole affair is over and done with now."

"Not your share in it. Miss Browning sent for me this evening to tell me how people were talking about you. She implied that it was a complete loss of your good name. You do not know, Molly, how slight a thing may blacken a girl's reputation for life. I had hard work to stand

all she said, even though I did not believe a word of it at the time. And now you have told me that much of it is true."

"But I think you are a brave man, papa. And you believe me, don't you? We shall outlive those rumours, never fear."

"You don't know the power of ill-natured tongues, child," said he.

"Oh, now you've called me 'child' again I don't care for anything. Dear, dear papa, I'm sure it is best and wisest to take no notice of these speeches. After all they may not mean them ill-naturedly. I am sure Miss Browning would not. By-and-by they'll quite forget how much they made out of so little,—and even if they don't, you would not have me break my solemn word, would you?"

"Perhaps not. But I cannot easily forgive the person who, by practising on your generosity, led you into this scrape. You are very young, and look upon these things as merely temporary evils. I have more experience."

"Still I don't see what I can do now, papa. Perhaps I've been foolish; but what I did, I did of my ownself. It was not suggested to me. And I'm sure it was not wrong in morals, whatever it might be in judgment. As I said, it is all over now; what I did ended the affair, I am thankful to say; and it was with that object I did it. If people choose to talk about me, I must submit; and so must you, dear papa."

"Does your mother—does Mrs. Gibson—know anything about it?" asked he with sudden anxiety.

"No; not a bit; not a word. Pray don't name it to her. That might lead to more mischief than anything else. I have really told you everything I am at liberty to tell."

It was a great relief to Mr. Gibson to find that his sudden fear that his wife might have been privy to it all was ill-founded; he had been seized by a sudden dread that she, whom he had chosen to marry in order to have a protectress and guide for his daughter, had been cognizant of this ill-advised adventure with Mr. Preston; nay, more, that she might even have instigated it to save her own child; for that Cynthia was somehow or other at the bottom of it all he had no doubt whatever. But now, at any rate, Mrs. Gibson had not been playing a treacherous part; that was all the comfort he could extract out of Molly's mysterious admission, that much mischief might result from Mrs. Gibson's knowing anything about these meetings with Mr. Preston.

"Then, what is to be done?" said he. "These reports are abroad,—am I to do nothing to contradict them? Am I to go about smiling and content with all this talk about you, passing from one idle gossip to another?"

"I'm afraid so. I'm very sorry, for I never meant you to have known anything about it, and I can see now how it must distress you. But surely when nothing more happens, and nothing comes of what has happened, the wonder and the gossip must die away; I know you believe every word I have said, and that you trust me, papa? Please, for my sake, be patient with all this gossip and cackle."

"It will try me hard, Molly," said he.

"For my sake, papa!"

"I don't see what else I can do," replied he moodily, "unless I get hold of Preston."

"That would be the worst of all. That would make a talk. And, after all, perhaps he was not so very much to blame. Yes! he was. But he behaved well to me as far as that goes," said she, suddenly recollecting his speech when Mr. Sheepshanks came up in the Towers' Park—"Don't stir, you have done nothing to be ashamed of."

"That is true. A quarrel between men which drags a woman's name into notice is to be avoided at any cost. But sooner or later I must have it out with Preston. He shall find it not so pleasant to have placed my daughter in equivocal circumstances."

"He did not place me. He did not know I was coming, did not expect to meet me either time; and would far rather not have taken the letter I gave him if he could have helped himself."

"It is all a mystery. I hate to have you mixed up in mysteries."

"I hate to be mixed up. But what can I do? I know of another mystery which I am pledged not to speak about. I cannot help myself."

"Well, all I can say is, never be the heroine of a mystery that you can avoid, if you can't help being an accessory. Then, I suppose, I must yield to your wishes and let this scandal wear itself out without any notice from me?"

"What else can you do under the circumstances?"

"Ay; what else indeed? How shall you hear it?"

For an instant the quick hot tears sprang into her eyes; to have everybody—all her world thinking evil of her, did seem hard to the girl who had never thought or said any unkind thing of them. But she smiled as she made answer—

"It's like tooth-drawing, it will be over some time. It would be much worse if I had really been doing wrong."

"Cynthia shall beware—" he began; but Molly put her hand before his mouth.

"Papa, Cynthia must not be accused, or suspected; you will drive her out of your house if you do, she is so proud, and so unprotected, except by you. And Roger,—for Roger's sake, you will never do or say anything to send Cynthia away, when he has trusted us all to take care of her, and love her in his absence. Oh! I think if she were really wicked, and I did not love her at all, I should feel bound to watch over her, he loves her so dearly. And she is really good at heart, and I do love her dearly. You must not vex or hurt Cynthia, papa,—remember she is dependent upon you!"

"I think the world would get on tolerably well, if there were no women in it. They plague the life out of one. You've made me forget, amongst you—poor old Job Haughton that I ought to have gone to see an hour ago."

Molly put up her mouth to be kissed. "You're not angry with me now, papa, are you?"

"Not out of my way" (kissing her all the same). "If I'm not angry with you, I ought to be; for you've caused a great deal of worry, which won't be over yet awhile, I can tell you."

For all Molly's bravery at the time of this conversation, it was she that suffered more than her father. He kept out of the way of hearing gossip; but she was perpetually thrown into the small society of the place. Mrs. Gibson herself had caught cold, and moreover was not tempted by the quiet old-fashioned visiting which was going on just about this time, provoked by the visit of two of Mrs. Dawes' pretty unrefined nieces, who laughed, and chattered, and ate, and would fain have flirted with Mr. Ashton, the vicar, could he have been brought by any possibility to understand his share in the business. Mr. Preston did not accept the invitations to Hollingford tea-drinkings with the same eager gratitude as he had done a year before: or else the shadow which hung over Molly would not have extended to him, her co-partner in the clandestine meetings which gave such umbrage to the feminine virtue of the town. Molly herself was invited, because it would not do to pass any apparent slight on either Mr. or Mrs. Gibson; but there was a tacit and under-hand protest against her being received on the old terms. Every one was civil to her, but no one was cordial; there was a very perceptible film of difference in their behaviour to her from what it was formerly; nothing that had outlines and could be defined. But Molly, for all her clear conscience and her brave heart, felt acutely that she was only tolerated, not welcomed. She caught the buzzing whispers of the two Miss Oakes's, who, when they first met the heroine of the prevailing scandal, looked at her askance, and criticized her pretensions to good looks, with hardly an attempt at under-tones. Molly tried to be thankful that her father was not in the mood for visiting. She was even glad that her stepmother was too much of an invalid to come out, when she felt thus slighted, and as it were, degraded from her place. Miss Browning herself, that true old friend, spoke to her with chilling dignity, and much reserve; for she had never heard a word from Mr. Gibson since the evening when she had put herself to so much pain to tell him of the disagreeable rumours affecting his daughter.

Only Miss Phoebe would seek out Molly with even more than her former tenderness; and this tried Molly's calmness more than all the slights put together. The soft hand, pressing hers under the table,—the continual appeals to her, so as to bring her back into the conversation, touched Molly almost to shedding tears. Sometimes the poor girl wondered to herself whether this change in the behaviour of her acquaintances was not a mere fancy of hers; whether, if she had never had that conversation with her father, in which she had borne herself so bravely at the time, she should have discovered the difference in their treatment of her. She never told her father how she felt these perpetual small slights; she had chosen to bear the burden of her own free will; nay,

more, she had insisted on being allowed to do so; and it was not for her to grieve him now by showing that she shrank from the consequences of her own act. So she never even made an excuse for not going into the small gaieties, or mingling with the society of Hollingford. Only she suddenly let go the stretch of restraint she was living in, when one evening her father told her that he was really anxious about Mrs. Gibson's cough, and should like Molly to give up a party at Mrs. Goodenough's, to which they were all three invited, but to which Molly alone was going. Molly's heart leaped up at the thoughts of stopping at home, even though the next moment she had to blame herself for rejoicing at a reprieve that was purchased by another's suffering. However, the remedies prescribed by her husband did Mrs. Gibson good; and she was particularly grateful and caressing to Molly.

"Really, dear!" said she, stroking Molly's head, "I think your hair is getting softer, and losing that disagreeable crisp curly feeling."

Then Molly knew that her stepmother was in high good-humour; the smoothness or curliness of her hair was a sure test of the favour in which Mrs. Gibson held her at the moment.

"I am so sorry to be the cause of detaining you from this little party, but dear papa is so over-anxious about me. I have always been a kind of pet with gentlemen, and poor Mr. Kirkpatrick never knew how to make enough of me. But I think Mr. Gibson is even more foolishly fond; his last words were, 'Take care of yourself, Hyacinth;' and then he came back again to say, 'If you don't attend to my directions I won't answer for the consequences.' I shook my forefinger at him, and said, 'Don't be so anxious, you silly man.'"

"I hope we have done everything he told us to do," said Molly.

"Oh yes! I feel so much better. Do you know, late as it is, I think you might go to Mrs. Goodenough's yet? Maria could take you, and I should like to see you dressed; when one has been wearing dull warm gowns for a week or two one gets quite a craving for bright colours, and evening dress. So go and get ready, dear, and then perhaps you'll bring me back some news, for really shut up as I have been with only papa and you for the last fortnight, I've got quite moped and dismal, and I can't bear to keep young people from the gaieties suitable to their age."

"Oh, pray, mamma! I had so much rather not go?"

"Very well! very well! Only I think it is rather selfish of you, when you see I am so willing to make the sacrifice for your sake."

"But you say it is a sacrifice to you, and I don't want to go."

"Very well; did I not say you might stop at home; only pray don't chop logic; nothing is so fatiguing to a sick person."

Then they were silent for some time. Mrs. Gibson broke the silence by saying, in a languid voice—

"Can't you think of anything amusing to say, Molly?"

Molly pumped up from the depths of her mind a few little trivialities which she had nearly forgotten, but she felt that they were anything but

amusing, and so Mrs. Gibson seemed to feel them; for presently she said—

"I wish Cynthia was at home." And Molly felt it as a reproach to her own dulness.

"Shall I write to her and ask her to come back?"

"Well, I'm not sure; I wish I knew a great many things. You've not heard anything of poor dear Osborne Hamley lately, have you?"

Remembering her father's charge not to speak of Osborne's health, Molly made no reply, nor was any needed, for Mrs. Gibson went on thinking aloud—

"You see, if Mr. Henderson has been as attentive as he was in the spring—and the chances about Roger—I shall be really grieved if anything happens to that young man, uncouth as he is, but it must be owned that Africa is not merely an unhealthy—it is a savage—and even in some parts a cannibal country. I often think of all I've read of it in geography books, as I lie awake at night, and if Mr. Henderson is really becoming attached! The future is hidden from us by infinite wisdom, Molly, or else I should like to know it; one would calculate one's behaviour at the present time so much better if one only knew what events were to come. But I think, on the whole, we had better not alarm Cynthia. If we had only known in time we might have planned for her to have come down with Lord Cumnor and my lady."

"Are they coming? Is Lady Cumnor well enough to travel?"

"Yes, to be sure. Or else I should not have considered whether or no Cynthia could have come down with them; it would have sounded very well—more than respectable, and would have given her a position among that lawyer set in London."

"Then Lady Cumnor is better?"

"To be sure. I should have thought papa would have mentioned it to you; but, to be sure, he is always so scrupulously careful not to speak about his patients. Quite right too—quite right and delicate. Why, he hardly ever tells me how they are going on. Yes! The Earl and the Countess, and Lady Harriet, and Lord and Lady Cuxhaven, and Lady Agnes; and I've ordered a new winter bonnet and a black satin cloak."

CHAPTER XLIX.

MOLLY GIBSON FINDS A CHAMPION.

LADY CUMNOR had so far recovered from the violence of her attack, and from the consequent operation, as to be able to be removed to the Towers for change of air; and accordingly she was brought thither by her whole family with all the pomp and state becoming an invalid personage. There was every probability that "the family" would make a longer residence at the Towers than they had done for several years, during

which time they had been wanderers hither and thither in search of health. Somehow, after all, it was very pleasant and restful to come to the old ancestral home, and every member of the family enjoyed it in his or her own way; Lord Cumnor most especially. His talent for gossip and his love of small details had scarcely fair play in the hurry of a London life, and were much nipped in the bud during his Continental sojournings, as he neither spoke French fluently, nor understood it easily when spoken. Besides, he was a great proprietor, and liked to know how his land was going on; how his tenants were faring in the world. He liked to hear of their births, marriages, and deaths, and had something of a royal memory for faces. In short, if ever a peer was an old woman, Lord Cumnor was that peer; but he was a very good-natured old woman, and rode about on his stout old cob with his pockets full of halfpence for the children, and little packets of snuff for the old people. Like an old woman, too, he enjoyed an afternoon cup of tea in his wife's sitting-room, and over his gossip's beverage he would repeat all that he had learnt in the day. Lady Cumnor was exactly in that state of convalescence when such talk as her lord's was extremely agreeable to her, but she had condemned the habit of listening to gossip so severely all her life, that she thought it due to consistency to listen first, and enter a supercilious protest afterwards. It had, however, come to be a family habit for all of them to gather together in Lady Cumnor's room on their return from their daily walks or drives or rides, and over the fire, sipping their tea at her early meal, to recount the morsels of local intelligence they had heard during the morning. When they had said all that they had to say (and not before), they had always to listen to a short homily from her ladyship on the well-worn texts,—the pooriness of conversation about persons,—the probable falsehood of all they had heard, and the degradation of character implied by its repetition. On one of these November evenings they were all assembled in Lady Cumnor's room. She was lying,—all draped in white, and covered up with an Indian shawl,—on a sofa near the fire. Lady Harriet sat on the rug, close before the wood-fire, picking up fallen embers with a pair of dwarf tongs, and piling them on the red and odorous heap in the centre of the hearth. Lady Cuxhaven, notable from girlhood, was using the blind-man's holiday to net fruit-nets for the walls at Cuxhaven Park. Lady Cumnor's woman was trying to see to pour out tea by the light of one small wax-candle in the background (for Lady Cumnor could not bear much light to her weakened eyes); and the great leafless branches of the trees outside the house kept sweeping against the windows, moved by the wind that was gathering.

It was always Lady Cumnor's habit to snub those she loved best. Her husband was perpetually snubbed by her, yet she missed him now that he was later than usual, and professed not to want her tea; but they all knew that it was only because he was not there to hand it to her, and beset her with his invariable stupidity in forgetting that she liked to put sugar in before she took any cream. At length he burst in:—

"I beg your pardon, my lady,—I'm later than I should have been, I know. Why, haven't you had your tea yet?" he exclaimed, bustling about to get the cup for his wife.

"You know I never take cream before I've sweetened it," said she, with even more emphasis on the "never" than usual.

"To be sure! What a simpleton I am! I think I might have remembered it by this time. You see I met old Sheepshanks, and that's the reason of it."

"Of your handing me the cream before the sugar?" asked his wife. It was one of her grim jokes.

"No, no! ha, ha! You're better this evening, I think, my dear. But, as I was saying, Sheepshanks is such an eternal talker, there's no getting away from him, and I had no idea it was so late!"

"Well, I think the least you can do is to tell us something of Mr. Sheepshanks' conversation now you have torn yourself away from him."

"Conversation! did I call it conversation? I don't think I said much. I listened. He really has always a great deal to say. More than Preston, for instance. And, by the way, he was telling me something about Preston;—old Sheepshanks thinks he'll be married before long,—he says there's a great deal of gossip going on about him and Gibson's daughter. They've been caught meeting in the park, and corresponding, and all that kind of thing that is likely to end in a marriage."

"I shall be very sorry," said Lady Harriet. "I always liked that girl; and I can't bear papa's model land-agent."

"I daresay it's not true," said Lady Cumnor, in a very audible aside to Lady Harriet. "Papa picks up stories one day to contradict them the next."

"Ah, but this did sound like truth. Sheepshanks said all the old ladies in the town had got hold of it, and were making a great scandal out of it."

"I don't think it does sound quite a nice story. I wonder what Clare could be doing to allow such goings on," said Lady Cuxhaven.

"I think it is much more likely that Clare's own daughter—that pretty pawky Miss Kirkpatrick—is the real heroine of this story," said Lady Harriet. "She always looks like a heroine of genteel comedy; and those young ladies were capable of a good deal of innocent intriguing, if I remember rightly. Now little Molly Gibson has a certain *gaucherie* about her which would disqualify her at once from any clandestine proceedings. Besides, 'clandestine!' why, the child is truth itself. Papa, are you sure Mr. Sheepshanks said it was Miss Gibson that was exciting Hollingford scandal? Wasn't it Miss Kirkpatrick? The notion of her and Mr. Preston making a match of it does not sound so incongruous; but, if it's my little friend Molly, I'll go to church and forbid the banns."

"Really, Harriet, I can't think what always makes you take such an interest in all these petty Hollingford affairs."

"Mamma, it's only tit for tat. They take the most lively interest in—"

all our sayings and doings. If I were going to be married, they would want to know every possible particular,—when we first met, what we first said to each other, what I wore, and whether he offered by letter or in person. I'm sure those good Miss Brownings were wonderfully well-informed as to Mary's methods of managing her nursery, and educating her girls; so it's only a proper return of the compliment to want to know on our side how they are going on. I am quite of papa's faction. I like to hear all the local gossip."

"Especially when it is flavoured with a spice of scandal and impropriety, as in this case," said Lady Cumnor, with the momentary bitterness of a convalescent invalid. Lady Harriet coloured with annoyance. But then she rallied her courage, and said with more gravity than before,—

"I am really interested in this story about Molly Gibson, I own. I both like and respect her; and I do not like to hear her name coupled with that of Mr. Preston. I can't help fancying papa has made some mistake."

"No, my dear. I'm sure I'm repeating what I heard. I'm sorry I said anything about it, if it annoys you or my lady there. Sheepshanks did say Miss Gibson, though, and he went on to say it was a pity the girl had got herself so talked about; for it was the way they had carried on that gave rise to all the chatter. Preston himself was a very fair match for her, and nobody could have objected to it. But I'll try and find a more agreeable piece of news. Old Margery at the lodge is dead; and they don't know where to find some one to teach clear-starching at your school; and Robert Hall made forty pounds last year by his apples." So they drifted away from Molly and her affairs; only Lady Harriet kept turning what she had heard over in her own mind with interest and wonder.

"I warned her against him the day of her father's wedding. And what a straightforward, out-spoken topic it was then! I don't believe it; it's only one of old Sheepshanks' stories, half invention and half deafness."

The next day Lady Harriet rode over to Hollingsford, and for the settling of her curiosity she called on Miss Brownings, and introduced the subject. She would not have spoken about the rumour she had heard to any who were not warm friends of Molly's. If Mr. Sheepshanks had chosen to allude to it when she had been riding with her father, she could very soon have silenced him by one of the haughty looks she knew full well how to assume. But she felt as if she must know the truth, and accordingly she began thus abruptly to Miss Browning.

"What is all this I hear about my little friend Molly Gibson and Mr. Preston?"

"Oh, Lady Harriet! have you heard of it? We are so sorry!"

"Sorry for what?"

"I think, begging your ladyship's pardon, we had better not say any more till we know how much you know," said Miss Browning.

"Nay," replied Lady Harriet, laughing a little, "I shan't tell what I know till I am sure you know more. Then we'll make an exchange if you like."

"I'm afraid it's no laughing matter for poor Molly," said Miss Browning, shaking her head. "People do say such things!"

"But I don't believe them; indeed I don't," burst in Miss Phoebe, half crying.

"No more will I, then," said Lady Harriet, taking the good lady's hand.

"It's all very fine, Phoebe, saying you don't believe them, but I should like to know who it was that convinced me, sadly against my will, I am sure."

"I only told you the facts as Mrs. Goodenough told them me, sister; but I'm sure if you had seen poor patient Molly as I have done, sitting up in a corner of a room, looking at the *Beauties of England and Wales* till she must have been sick of them, and no one speaking to her; and she as gentle and sweet as ever at the end of the evening, though maybe a bit pale—facts or no facts, I won't believe anything against her."

So there sate Miss Phoebe, in tearful defiance of facts.

"And, as I said before, I'm quite of your opinion," said Lady Harriet.

"But how does your ladyship explain away her meetings with Mr. Preston in all sorts of unlikely and open-air places?" asked Miss Browning, who, to do her justice, would have been only too glad to join Molly's partisans, if she could have preserved her character for logical deduction at the same time. "I went so far as to send for her father and tell him all about it. I thought at least he would have horsewhipped Mr. Preston; but he seems to have taken no notice of it."

"Then we may be quite sure he knows some way of explaining matters that we don't," said Lady Harriet, decisively. "After all, there may be a hundred and fifty perfectly natural and justifiable explanations."

"Mr. Gibson knew of none when I thought it my duty to speak to him," said Miss Browning.

"Why, suppose that Mr. Preston is engaged to Miss Kirkpatrick, and Molly is confidante and messenger."

"I don't see that your ladyship's supposition much alters the blame. Why, if he is honourably engaged to Cynthia Kirkpatrick, does he not visit her openly at her home in Mr. Gibson's house? Why does Molly lend herself to clandestine proceedings?"

"One can't account for everything," said Lady Harriet, a little impatiently, for reason was going hard against her. "But I choose to have faith in Molly Gibson. I'm sure she's not done anything very wrong. I've a great mind to go and call on her—Mrs. Gibson is confined to her room with this horrid influenza—and take her with me on a round of calls through this little gossiping town,—on Mrs. Goodenough, or Baddenough, who seems to have been propagating all these stories. But I've not time to-day. I've to meet papa at three, and it's three now. Only remember,

Miss Phoebe, it's you and I against the world, in defence of a distressed damsel."

"Don Quixote and Sancho Panza?" said she to herself as she ran lightly down Miss Browning's old-fashioned staircase.

"Now, I don't think that's pretty of you, Phoebe," said Miss Browning in some displeasure, as soon as she was alone with her sister. "First, you convince me against my will, and make me very unhappy; and I have to do unpleasant things, all because you've made me believe that certain statements are true; and then you turn round and cry, and say you don't believe a word of it all, making me out a regular ogre and backbiter. No! it's of no use. I shan't listen to you." So she left Miss Phoebe in tears, and locked herself up in her own room.

Lady Harriet, meanwhile, was riding homewards by her father's side, apparently listening to all he chose to say, but in reality turning over the probabilities and possibilities that might account for these strange interviews between Molly and Mr. Preston. It was a case of *parler de l'âne et l'on en voit les oreilles*. At a turn in the road they saw Mr. Preston a little way before them, coming towards them on his good horse, *point device*, in his riding attire.

The earl, in his threadbare coat, and on his old brown cob, called out cheerfully,—

"Aha! here's Preston. Good-day to you. I was just wanting to ask you about that slip of pasture-land on the Home Farm. John Brickkill wants to plough it up and crop it. It's not two acres at the best."

While they were talking over this bit of land, Lady Harriet came to her resolution. As soon as her father had finished, she said,—

"Mr. Preston, perhaps you will allow me to ask you one or two questions to relieve my mind, for I am in some little perplexity at present."

"Certainly; I shall only be too happy to give you any information in my power." But the moment after he had made this polite speech, he recollected Molly's speech—that she would refer her case to Lady Harriet. But the letters had been returned, and the affair was now wound up. She had come off conqueror, he the vanquished. Surely she would never have been so ungenerous as to appeal after that.

"There are reports about Miss Gibson and you current among the gossips of Hollingford. Are we to congratulate you on your engagement to that young lady?"

"Ah! by the way, Preston, we ought to have done it before," interrupted Lord Cumnor, in hasty goodwill. But his daughter said quietly, "Mr. Preston has not yet told us if the reports are well founded, papa."

She looked at him with the air of a person expecting an answer, and expecting a truthful answer.

"I am not so fortunate," replied he, trying to make his horse appear sidgely, without incurring observation.

"Then I may contradict that report?" asked Lady Harriet quickly. "Or is there any reason for believing that in time it may come true? I ask because such reports, if unfounded, do harm to young ladies."

"Keep other sweethearts off," put in Lord Cumnor, looking a good deal pleased at his own discernment. Lady Harriet went on:—

"And I take a great interest in Miss Gibson."

Mr. Preston saw from her manner that he was "in for it," as he expressed it to himself. The question was, how much or how little did she know?

"I have no expectation or hope of ever having a nearer interest in Miss Gibson than I have at present. I shall be glad if this straightforward answer relieves your ladyship from your perplexity."

He could not help the touch of insolence that accompanied these last words. It was not in the words themselves, nor in the tone in which they were spoken, nor in the look which accompanied them, it was in all; it implied a doubt of Lady Harriet's right to question him as she did; and there was something of defiance in it as well. But this touch of insolence put Lady Harriet's mettle up; and she was not one to check herself, in any course, for the opinion of an inferior.

"Then, sir! are you aware of the injury you may do to a young lady's reputation if you meet her, and detain her in long conversations, when she is walking by herself, unaccompanied by any one? You give rise—you have given rise to reports."

"My dear Harriet, are not you going too far? You don't know—Mr. Preston may have intentions—acknowledged intentions."

"No, my lord. I have no intentions with regard to Miss Gibson. She may be a very worthy young lady—I have no doubt she is. Lady Harriet seems determined to push me into such a position that I cannot but acknowledge myself to be—it is not enviable—not pleasant to own—but I am, in fact, a jilted man; jilted by Miss Kirkpatrick, after a tolerably long engagement. My interviews with Miss Gibson were not of the most agreeable kind—as you may conclude when I tell you she was, I believe, the instigator—certainly, she was the agent in this last step of Miss Kirkpatrick's. Is your ladyship's curiosity" (with an emphasis on this last word) "satisfied with this rather mortifying confession of mine?"

"Harriet, my dear, you've gone too far—we had no right to pry into Mr. Preston's private affairs."

"No more I had," said Lady Harriet, with a smile of winning frankness: the first smile she had accorded to Mr. Preston for many a long day; ever since the time, years ago, when, presuming on his handsomeness, he had assumed a tone of gallant familiarity with Lady Harriet, and paid her personal compliments as he would have done to an equal.

"But he will excuse me, I hope," continued she, still in that gracious manner which made him feel that he now held a much higher place in her esteem than he had had at the beginning of their interview, "when he learns that the busy tongues of the Hellingford ladies have been speaking

of my friend, Miss Gibson, in the most unwarrantable manner; drawing unjustifiable inferences from the facts of that intercourse with Mr. Preston, the nature of which he has just conferred such a real obligation on me by explaining."

"I think I need hardly request Lady Harriet to consider this explanation of mine as confidential," said Mr. Preston.

"Of course, of course!" said the earl; "every one will understand that." And he rode home, and told his wife and Lady Cuxhaven the whole conversation between Lady Harriet and Mr. Preston; in the strictest confidence, of course. Lady Harriet had to stand a good many strictures on manners, and proper dignity for a few days after this. However, she consoled herself by calling on the Gibsons; and, finding that Mrs. Gibson (who was still an invalid) was asleep at the time, she experienced no difficulty in carrying off the unconscious Molly for a walk, which Lady Harriet so contrived that they twice passed through all the length of the principal street of the town, loitered at Grinstead's for half an hour, and wound up by Lady Harriet's calling on the Miss Brownings, who, to her regret, were not at home.

"Perhaps, it is as well," said she, after a minute's consideration. "I'll leave my card, and put your name down underneath it, Molly."

Molly was a little puzzled by the manner in which she had been taken possession of, like an inanimate chattel, for all the afternoon, and exclaimed,—

"Please, Lady Harriet—I never leave cards; I have not got any, and on the Miss Brownings, of all people; why, I am in and out whenever I like."

"Never mind, little one. To-day you shall do everything properly, and according to full etiquette."

"And now tell Mrs. Gibson to come out to the Towers for a long day; we will send the carriage for her whenever she will let us know that she is strong enough to come. Indeed, she had better come for a few days; at this time of the year it does not do for an invalid to be out in the evenings, even in a carriage." So spoke Lady Harriet, standing on the white door-steps at Miss Brownings', and holding Molly's hand while she wished her good-by. "You'll tell her, dear, that I came partly to see her—but that finding her asleep, I ran off with you, and don't forget about her coming to stay with us for change of air—*madame* will like it, I'm sure—and the carriage, and all that. And now good-by, we've done a good day's work! And better than you're aware of," continued she, still addressing Molly, though the latter was quite out of hearing.

"Hollingford is not the place I take it to be, if it doesn't veer round in Miss Gibson's favour after my to-day's trotting of that child about."

CHAPTER L.

CYNTHIA AT BAY.

Mrs. GIBSON was slow in recovering her strength after the influenza, and before she was well enough to accept Lady Harriet's invitation to the Towers, Cynthia came home from London. If Molly had thought her manner of departure was scarcely as affectionate and considerate as it might have been,—if such a thought had crossed Molly's fancy for an instant, she was repentant for it as soon as ever Cynthia returned, and the girls met together face to face, with all the old familiar affection, going upstairs to the drawing-room, with their arms round each other's waists, and sitting there together hand in hand. Cynthia's whole manner was more quiet than it had been, when the weight of her unpleasant secret rested on her mind, and made her alternately despondent or flighty.

"After all," said Cynthia, "there's a look of home about these rooms which is very pleasant. But I wish I could see you looking stronger, mamma! that's the only unpleasant thing. Molly, why didn't you send for me?"

"I wanted to do," began Molly.

"But I wouldn't let her," said Mrs. Gibson. "You were much better in London than here, for you could have done me no good; and your letters were very agreeable to read; and now Helen is better, and I'm nearly well, and you've come home just at the right time, for everybody is full of the Charity Ball."

"But we are not going this year, mamma," said Cynthia decidedly. "It is on the 25th, isn't it? and I'm sure you'll never be well enough to take us."

"You really seem determined to make me out worse than I am, child," said Mrs. Gibson, rather querulously, she being one of those who, when their malady is only trifling, exaggerate it, but when it is really of some consequence, are unwilling to sacrifice any pleasures by acknowledging it. It was well for her in this instance that her husband had wisdom and authority enough to forbid her going to this ball, on which she had set her heart; but the consequence of his prohibition was an increase of domestic plaintiveness and low spirits, which seemed to tell on Cynthia—the bright girl Cynthia herself—and it was often hard work for Molly to keep up the spirits of two other people as well as her own. Ill-health might account for Mrs. Gibson's despondency, but why was Cynthia so silent, not to say so sighing? Molly was puzzled to account for it; and all the more perplexed because from time to time Cynthia kept calling upon her for praise for some unknown and mysterious virtue that she had practised; and Molly was young enough to believe that, after any exercise of virtue, the spirits rose, cheered up by an approving conscience. Such was not the case with Cynthia, however. She sometimes said such things as these, when she had been particularly inert and desponding:—

"Ah, Molly, you must let my goodness lie fallow for a while! It has borne such a wonderful crop this year. I have been so pretty-behaved—if you knew all!" Or, "Really, Molly, my virtue must come down from the clouds! It was strained to the utmost in London—and I find it is like a kite—after soaring aloft for some time, it suddenly comes down, and gets tangled in all sorts of briars and brambles; which things are all allegory, unless you can bring yourself to believe in my extraordinary goodness while I was away—giving me a sort of right to fall foul of all mamma's briars and brambles now."

But Molly had had some experience of Cynthia's whim of perpetually hinting at a mystery which she did not mean to reveal in the Mr. Preston days, and, although she was occasionally piqued into curiosity, Cynthia's allusions at something more in the background fell in general on rather deaf ears. One day the mystery burst its shell, and came out in the shape of an offer made to Cynthia by Mr. Henderson—and refused. Under all the circumstances, Molly could not appreciate the heroic goodness so often alluded to. The revelation of the secret at last took place in this way. Miss Gibson breakfasted in bed: she had done so ever since she had had the influenza; and, consequently, her own private letters always went up on her breakfast-tray. One morning she came into the drawing-room earlier than usual, with an open letter in her hand.

"I've had a letter from aunt Kirkpatrick, Cynthia. She sends me my dividends,—your uncle is so busy. But what does she mean by this, Cynthia" (holding out the letter to her, with a certain paragraph indicated by her finger). Cynthia put her netting on one side, and looked at the writing. Suddenly her face turned scarlet, and then became of a deadly white. She looked at Molly, as if to gain courage from the strong serene countenance.

"It means—mamma, I may as well tell you at once—Mr. Henderson offered to me while I was in London, and I refused him."

"Refused him—and you never told me, but let me hear it by chance! Really, Cynthia, I think you're very unkind. And pray what made you refuse Mr. Henderson? Such a fine young man,—and such a gentleman! Your uncle told me he had a very good private fortune besides."

"Mamma, do you forget that I have promised to marry Roger Hamley?" said Cynthia quietly.

"No! of course I don't—how can I, with Molly always dining the word 'engagement' into my ears? But really, when one considers all the uncertainties,—and after all it was not a distinct promise,—he seemed almost as if he might have looked forward to something of this sort."

"Of what sort, mamma?" said Cynthia sharply.

"Why, of a more eligible offer. He must have known you might change your mind, and meet with some one you liked better: so little as you had seen of the world." Cynthia made an impatient movement, as if to stop her mother.

"I never said I liked him better,—how can you talk so, mamma?"

"I'm going to marry Roger, and there's an end of it. I will not be spoken to about it again." She got up and left the room.

"Going to marry Roger! That's all very fine. But who is to guarantee his coming back alive! And if he does, what have they to marry upon, I should like to know? I don't wish her to have accepted Mr. Henderson, though I am sure she liked him; and true love ought to have its course, and not be thwarted; but she need not have quite finally refused him until—well, until we had seen how matters turn out. Such an invalid as I am too! It has given me quite a palpitation at the heart. I do call it quite unfeeling of Cynthia."

"Certainly," began Molly; but then she remembered that her step-mother was far from strong, and unable to bear a protest in favour of the right course without irritation. So she changed her speech into a suggestion of remedies for palpitation; and curbed her impatience to speak out her indignation at the contemplated falsehood to Roger. But when they were alone, and Cynthia began upon the subject, Molly was less merciful. Cynthia said,—

"Well, Molly, and now you know all! I've been longing to tell you—and yet somehow I could not."

"I suppose it was a repetition of Mr. Coxe," said Molly gravely. "You were agreeable,—and he took it for something more."

"I don't know," sighed Cynthia. "I mean I don't know if I was agreeable or not. He was very kind—very pleasant—but I did not expect it all to end as it did. However, it is of no use thinking of it."

"No!" said Molly, simply; for to her mind the pleasantest and kindest person in the world put in comparison with Roger was as nothing; he stood by himself. Cynthia's next words,—and they did not come very soon,—were on quite a different subject, and spoken in rather a pettish tone. Nor did she allude again in jesting sadness to her late efforts at virtue.

In a little while Mrs. Gibson was able to accept the often-repeated invitation from the Towers to go and stay there for a day or two. Lady Harriet told her that it would be a kindness to Lady Cumnor to come and bear her company in the life of seclusion the latter was still compelled to lead; and Mrs. Gibson was flattered and gratified with a dim unconscious sense of being really wanted, not merely deluding herself into a pleasing fiction. Lady Cumnor was in that state of convalescence common to many invalids. The spring of life had begun again to flow, and with the flow returned the old desires and projects and plans, which had all become mere matters of indifference during the worst part of her illness. But as yet her bodily strength was not sufficient to be an agent to her energetic mind, and the difficulty of driving the ill-matched pair of body and will—the one weak and languid, the other strong and stern,—made her ladyship often very irritable. Mrs. Gibson herself was not quite strong enough for a "*souffre-douleur*;" and the visit to the Towers was not,

on the whole, quite so happy a one as she had anticipated. Lady Cuxhaven and Lady Harriet, each aware of their mother's state of health and temper, but only alluding to it as slightly as was absolutely necessary in their conversations with each other, took care not to leave "Clare" too long with Lady Cumnor; but several times when one or the other went to relieve guard they found Clare in tears, and Lady Cumnor holding forth on some point on which she had been meditating during the silent hours of her illness, and on which she seemed to consider herself born to set the world to rights. Mrs. Gibson was always apt to consider these remarks as addressed with a personal direction at some error of her own, and defended the fault in question with a sense of property in it, whatever it might happen to be. The second and the last day of her stay at the Towers, Lady Harriet came in, and found her mother haranguing in an excited tone of voice, and Clare looking submissive and miserable and oppressed.

"What's the matter, dear mamma? Are not you tiring yourself with talking?"

"No, not at all! I was only speaking of the folly of people's dressing above their station. I began by telling Clare of the fashions of my grandmother's days, when every class had a sort of costume of its own,—and servants did not ape tradespeople, nor tradespeople professional men, and so on,—and what must the foolish woman do but begin to justify her own dress, as if I had been accusing her, or even thinking about her at all. Such nonsense! Really, Clare, your husband has spoilt you sadly, if you can't listen to any one without thinking they are alluding to you! People may flatter themselves just as much by thinking that their faults are always present to other people's minds, as if they believe that the world is always contemplating their individual charms and virtues."

"I was told, Lady Cumnor, that this silk was reduced in price. I bought it at Waterloo House after the season was over," said Mrs. Gibson, touching the very handsome gown she wore in deprecation of Lady Cumnor's angry voice, and blundering on to the very source of irritation.

"Again, Clare! How often must I tell you I had no thought of you or your gowns, or whether they cost much or little; your husband has to pay for them, and it is his concern if you spend more on your dress than you ought to do."

"It was only five guineas for the whole dress," pleaded Mrs. Gibson.

"And very pretty it is," said Lady Harriet, stooping to examine it, and so hoping to soothe the poor aggrieved woman. But Lady Cumnor went on.

"No! you ought to have known me better by this time. When I think a thing I say it out. I don't beat about the bush. I use straight-forward language. I will tell you where I think you have been in fault, Clare, if you like to know." Like it or not, the plain-speaking was coming now. "You have spoilt that girl of yours till she does not know

her own mind. She has behaved abominably to Mr. Preston ; and it is all in consequence of the faults in her education. You have much to answer for."

"Mamma, mamma!" said Lady Harriet, "Mr. Preston did not wish it spoken about." And at the same moment Mrs. Gibson exclaimed, "Cynthia—Mr. Preston!" in such a tone of surprise, that if Lady Cumnor had been in the habit of observing the revelations made by other people's tones and voices, she would have found out that Mrs. Gibson was ignorant of the affair to which she was alluding.

"As for Mr. Preston's wishes, I do not suppose I am bound to regard them when I feel it my duty to reprove error," said Lady Cumnor loftily to Lady Harriet. "And, Clare, do you mean to say that you are not aware that your daughter has been engaged to Mr. Preston for some time—years, I believe,—and has at last chosen to break it off,—and has used the Gibson girl—I forget her name,—as a cat's-paw, and made both her and herself the town's talk—the butt for all the gossip of Hollingford. I remember when I was young there was a girl called Jilting Jessy. You'll have to watch over your young lady, or she will get some such name. I speak to you like a friend, Clare, when I tell you it's my opinion that girl of yours will get herself into some more mischief yet before she's safely married. Not that I care one straw for Mr. Preston's feelings. I don't even know if he's got feelings or not; but I know what is becoming in a young woman, and jilting is not. And now you may both go away, and send Dawson to me, for I'm tired, and want to have a little sleep."

"Indeed, Lady Cumnor—will you believe me?—I do not think Cynthia was ever engaged to Mr. Preston. There was an old flirtation. I was afraid —"

"Ring the bell for Dawson," said Lady Cumnor, wearily: her eyes closed. Lady Harriet had too much experience of her mother's moods not to lead Mrs. Gibson away almost by main force, she protesting all the while that she did not think there was any truth in the statement, though it was dear Lady Cumnor that said it.

Once in her own room, Lady Harriet said, "Now, Clare, I'll tell you all about it; and I think you'll have to believe it, for it was Mr. Preston himself who told me. I heard of a great commotion in Hollingford about Mr. Preston; and I met him riding out, and asked him what it was all about; he did not want to speak about it, evidently. No man does, I suppose, when he's been jilted; and he made both papa and me promise not to tell; but papa did—and that's what mamma has for a foundation; you see, a really good one."

"But Cynthia is engaged to another man—she really is. And another—a very good match indeed—has just been offering to her in London. Mr. Preston is always at the root of mischief."

"Nay! I do think in this case it must be that pretty Miss Cynthia of yours who has drawn on one man to be engaged to her,—not to say two,—and another to make her an offer. I can't endure Mr. Preston, but I think

it's rather hard to accuse him of having called up the rivals, who are, I suppose, the occasion of his being jilted."

"I don't know; I always feel as if he owed me a grudge, and men have so many ways of being spiteful. You must acknowledge that if he had not met you I should not have had dear Lady Cumnor so angry with me."

"She only wanted to warn you about Cynthia. Mamma has always been very particular about her own daughters. She has been very severe on the least approach to flirting, and Mary will be like her!"

"But Cynthia will flirt, and I can't help it. She is not noisy, or giggling; she is always a lady—that everybody must own. But she has a way of attracting men, she must have inherited from me, I think." And here she smiled faintly, and would not have rejected a confirmatory compliment, but none came. "However, I will speak to her; I will get to the bottom of the whole affair. Pray tell Lady Cumnor that it has so fluttered me the way she spoke, about my dress and all. And it only cost five guineas after all, reduced from eight!"

"Well, never mind now. You are looking very much flushed; quite feverish! I left you too long in mamma's hot room. But do you know she is so much pleased to have you here?" And so Lady Cumnor really was, in spite of the continual lectures which she gave "Clare," and which poor Mrs. Gibson turned under as helplessly as the typical worm. Still it was something to have a countess to scold her; and that pleasure would endure when the worry was past. And then Lady Harriet petted her more than usual to make up for what she had to go through in the convalescent's room; and Lady Cuxhaven talked sense to her, with dashes of science and deep thought intermixed, which was very flattering, although generally unintelligible; and Lord Cumnor, good-natured, good-tempered, kind, and liberal, was full of gratitude to her for her kindness in coming to see Lady Cumnor, and his gratitude took the tangible shape of a haunch of venison, to say nothing of lesser game. When she looked back upon her visit as she drove home in the solitary grandeur of the Towers' carriage, there had been but one great enduring rub—Lady Cumnor's crossness—and she chose to consider Cynthia as the cause of that, instead of seeing the truth, which had been so often set before her by the members of her ladyship's family, that it took its origin in her state of health. Mrs. Gibson did not exactly mean to visit this one discomfort upon Cynthia, nor did she quite mean to upbraid her daughter for conduct as yet unexplained, and which might have some justification; but, finding her quietly sitting in the drawing-room, she sat down despondingly in her own little easy chair, and in reply to Cynthia's quick, pleasant greeting of—

"Well, mamma, how are you? We did not expect you so early! Let me take off your bonnet and shawl!" she replied dolefully,—

"It has not been such a happy visit that I should wish to prolong it." Her eyes were fixed on the carpet, and her face was as irresponsive to the welcome offered as she could make it.

"What has been the matter?" asked Cynthia, in all good faith.

"You! Cynthia—you! I little thought when you were born how I should have to bear to hear you spoken about."

Cynthia threw back her head, and angry light came into her eyes.

"What business have they with me? How came they to talk about me in any way?"

"Everybody is talking about you; it is no wonder they are. Lord Oulnor is sure to hear about everything always. You should take more care about what you do, Cynthia, if you don't like being talked about."

"It rather depends upon what people say," said Cynthia, affecting a lightness which she did not feel; for she had a prevision of what was coming.

"Well! I don't like it, at any rate. It is not pleasant to me to hear first of my daughter's misdoings from Lady Cumnor, and then to be lectured about her, and her flirting, and her jilting, as if I had had anything to do with it. I can assure you it has quite spoilt my visit. No! don't touch my shawl. When I go to my room I can take it myself."

Cynthia was brought to bay, and sat down; remaining with her mother, who kept sighing ostentatiously from time to time.

"Would you mind telling me what they said? If there are accusations abroad against me, it is as well I should know what they are. Here's Molly" (as the girl entered the room, fresh from a morning's walk).

"Molly, mamma has come back from the Towers, and my lord and my lady have been doing me the honour to talk over my crimes and misdeemeanors, and I am asking mamma what they have said. I don't set up for more virtue than other people, but I can't make out what an earl and a countess have to do with poor little me."

"It was not for your sake!" said Mrs. Gibson. "It was for mine. They felt for me, for it is not pleasant to have one's child's name in everybody's mouth."

"As I said before, that depends upon how it is in everybody's mouth. If I were going to marry Lord Hollingford, I make no doubt every one would be talking about me, and neither you nor I should mind it in the least."

"But this is no marriage with Lord Hollingford, so it is nonsense to talk as if it was. They say you've gone and engaged yourself to Mr. Preston, and now refuse to marry him; and they call that jilting."

"Do you wish me to marry him, mamma?" asked Cynthia, her face in a flame, her eyes cast down. Molly stood by, very hot, not fully understanding it; and only kept where she was by the hope of coming in as sweetener or peacemaker, or helper of some kind.

"No," said Mrs. Gibson, evidently discomfited by the question. "Of course I don't; you have gone and entangled yourself with Roger Hamley, a very worthy young man; but nobody knows where he is, and if he's dead or alive; and he has not a penny if he is alive."

"I beg your pardon. I know that he has some fortune from his mother ; it may not be much, but he is not penniless ; and he is sure to earn fame and great reputation, and with it money will come," said Cynthia.

"You've entangled yourself with him, and you've done something of the sort with Mr. Preston, and got yourself into such an imbroglio" (Mrs. Gibson could not have said "mess" for the world, although the word was present to her mind), "that when a really eligible person comes forward—handsome, agreeable, and quite the gentleman—and a good private fortune into the bargain, you have to refuse him. You'll end as an old maid, Cynthia, and it will break my heart."

"I daresay I shall," said Cynthia, quietly. "I sometimes think I am the kind of person of which old maids are made!" She spoke seriously, and a little sadly.

Mrs. Gibson began again. "I don't want to know your secrets as long as they are secrets ; but when all the town is talking about you, I think I ought to be told."

"But, mamma, I did not know I was such a subject of conversation ; and even now I can't make out how it has come about."

"No more can I. I only know that they say you've been engaged to Mr. Preston, and ought to have married him, and that I can't help it, if you did not choose, any more than I could have helped your refusing Mr. Henderson ; and yet I am constantly blamed for your misconduct. I think it's very hard." Mrs. Gibson began to cry. Just then her husband came in.

"You here, my dear ! Welcome back," said he, coming up to her courteously, and kissing her cheek. "Why, what's the matter ? Tears ?" and he heartily wished himself away again.

"Yes !" said she, raising herself up, and clutching after sympathy of any kind, at any price. "I'm come home again, and I'm telling Cynthia how Lady Cumnor has been so cross to me, and all through her. Did you know she had gone and engaged herself to Mr. Preston, and then broken it off ? Everybody is talking about it, and they know it up at the Towers."

For one moment his eyes met Molly's, and he comprehended it all. He made his lips up into a whistle, but no sound came. Cynthia had quite lost her delicate manner since her mother had spoken to Mr. Gibson, Molly sat down by her.

"Cynthia," said he, very seriously.

"Yes !" she answered, softly.

"Is this true ? I had heard something of it before—not much ; but, there is scandal enough about to make it desirable that you should have some protector—some friend who knows the whole truth."

No answer. At last she said, "Molly knows it all."

Mrs. Gibson, too, had been awed into silence by her husband's grave manner, and she did not like to give vent to the jealous thought in her

mind that Molly had known the secret of which she was ignorant. Mr. Gibson replied to Cynthia with some sternness:

"Yes! I know that Molly knows it all, and that she has had to bear slander and ill words for your sake, Cynthia. But she refused to tell me more."

"She told you that much, did she?" said Cynthia, aggrieved.

"I could not help it," said Molly.

"She did not name your name," said Mr. Gibson. "At the time I believe she thought she had concealed it—but there was no mistaking who it was."

"Why did she speak about it at all?" said Cynthia, with some bitterness. Her tone—her question stirred up Mr. Gibson's passion.

"It was necessary for her to justify herself to me—I heard my daughter's reputation attacked for the private meetings she had given to Mr. Preston—I came to her for an explanation. There is no need to be ungenerous, Cynthia, because you have been a flirt and a jilt even to the degree of dragging Molly's name down into the same mire."

Cynthia lifted her bowed-down head, and looked at him.

"You say that of me, Mr. Gibson. Not knowing what the circumstances are, you say that!"

"He had spoken too strongly: he knew it. But he could not bring himself to own it just at that moment. The thought of his sweet innocent Molly, who had borne so much patiently, prevented any retraction of his words at the time.

"Yes!" he said, "I do say it. You cannot tell what evil constructions are put upon actions ever so slightly beyond the bounds of maidenly propriety. I do say that Molly has had a great deal to bear, in consequence of this clandestine engagement of yours, Cynthia—there may be extenuating circumstances, I acknowledge—but you will need to remember them all to excuse your conduct to Roger Hamley, when he comes home. I asked you to tell me the full truth, in order that until he comes, and has a legal right to protect you, I may do so." No answer. "It certainly requires explanation," continued he. "Here are you engaged to two men at once to all appearances!" Still no answer. "To be sure, the gossips of the town have not yet picked out the fact of Roger Hamley's being your accepted lover; but scandal has been resting on Molly, and ought to have rested on you, Cynthia—for a concealed engagement to Mr. Preston—necessitating meetings in all sorts of places unknown to your friends."

"Papa," said Molly, "if you knew all you would not speak so to Cynthia. I wish she would tell you herself all that she has told me."

"I am ready to hear whatever she has to say," said he. But Cynthia said,—

"No! you have prejudged me; you have spoken to me as you had no right to speak. I refuse to give you my confidence, or accept your help.

People are very cruel to me"—her voice trembled for a moment—"I did not think you would have been. But I can bear it."

And then, in spite of Molly, who could have detained her by force, she tore herself away, and hastily left the room.

"Oh, papa!" said Molly, crying, and clinging to him, "do let me tell you all." And then she suddenly recollected the awkwardness of telling some of the details of the story before Mrs. Gibson, and stopped short.

"I think, Mr. Gibson, you have been very very unkind to my poor fatherless child," said Mrs. Gibson, emerging from behind her pocket-handkerchief. "I only wish her poor father had been alive, and all this would never have happened."

"Very probably. Still I cannot see of what either she or you have to complain. Inasmuch as we could, I and mine have sheltered her; I have loved her; I do love her almost as if she were my own child—as well as Molly, I do not pretend to do."

"That's it, Mr. Gibson! you do not treat her like your own child." But in the midst of this wrangle Molly stole out, and went in search of Cynthia. She thought she bore an olive-branch of healing in the sound of her father's just spoken words: "I do love her almost as if she were my own child." But Cynthia was locked into her room, and refused to open the door.

"Open to me, please," pleaded Molly. "I have something to say to you—I want to see you—do open!"

"No!" said Cynthia. "Not now. I am busy. Leave me alone. I don't want to hear what you have got to say. I do not want to see you. By-and-by we shall meet, and then——" Molly stood quite quietly, wondering what new words of more persuasion she could use. In a minute or two Cynthia called out, "Are you there still, Molly?" and when Molly answered "Yes," and hoped for a relenting, the same hard metallic voice, telling of resolution and repression, spoke out, "Go away. I cannot bear the feeling of your being there—waiting and listening. Go downstairs—out of the house—anywhere away. It is the most you can do for me, now."

“Acquitted on the Ground of Insanity.”

(From a “Mad Doctor’s” Point of View.)

WHEN men read in the newspapers that a murderer has been declared “Not guilty” on the ground of insanity, the intelligence affects them in various ways. One man thinks that a lunatic, if he be so dangerous by reason of his lunacy as to commit murder, ought straightway to be hanged, that he may murder no more. Another thinks that, lunatic or not, he knew that he was doing wrong, therefore he is liable to the punishment due to murder. Another will not believe that the man was a lunatic at all, but thinks that he has been got off by “those mad doctors.” A fourth will gravely say that an asylum, and not the gallows, is the fit place for an insane man.

Public opinion has its rhythmical ebb and flow of excitement on this point, which last year was vehemently argued everywhere in connection with the trial of Townley, and the subsequent proceedings. This year, in the same town of Derby, a man just escaped being hanged in a state of acute mania, and no one took the least notice. This man, James Potter, was tried on March 9th before Justice Willes, for the murder of his wife, and sentenced to death. Ten days after he was so raving mad, that the authorities were obliged to acquaint Sir George Grey with the fact. Then was done that which should have been done before the trial. Dr. Hood, one of the Chancery visitors, and Dr. Meyer, the superintendent of the Broadmoor State Lunatic Asylum, were sent to examine him, and of course he was removed to a lunatic asylum. Before another *casus célèbre* is tried, it may be not unprofitable to consider the whole question once more, and to ascertain, if possible, whence arise the disputes, the scandal, and the violent feeling which is shown from time to time when an insane man is acquitted on the ground of insanity, or a sane man escapes justice because he is represented to be insane. When public feeling is excited, every man and woman makes up his or her mind upon the case, and is ready to do battle for it, as people always are for any opinion on a dim and mysterious matter not to be brought under the rules of plain downright demonstration. There is something incomprehensible about insanity, and folks’ ideas of it partake of the nature of a faith; so when a dispute occurs, every one is perfectly certain—he knows not why—that the alleged lunatic is or is not insane, and no scientific evidence as at present given adds to or takes from this conviction. Essays and treatises, more or less to the point, are periodically produced in medical and legal works; but these are not read by the

general public. Before people can change their views of any subject, they must have a clearer insight into it. Till lately, even those who had the most experience of insanity were devoid of all method of the study of mind—sane and insane. When it is fully made known that the study of each is necessary to a just conception of the other, and that the method of such study is a natural and not a metaphysical one, then we may hope that men will form for themselves accurate judgments, and will reason upon sound principles whenever they discuss such questions. The pages of this Magazine seem no unfitting place in which to draw attention to the existing controversies, and to propose amendments, if any can be thought of. The public talks of the scandals of such cases as the Windham and Townley trials. The lawyers lay all the blame on the doctors, and the doctors retort upon the lawyers, but no change of any kind is made, and the next case may possibly be a greater scandal than any that have gone before.

Complaints are constantly made, especially by doctors, of the so-called "legal test of insanity." At a meeting of the officers of asylums held July, 1864, the following resolution was proposed, and almost without discussion agreed to:—"That so much of the legal test of the mental condition of an alleged criminal lunatic, which renders him a responsible agent because he knows the difference between right and wrong, is inconsistent with the fact well known to every member of this meeting, that the power of distinguishing between right and wrong exists frequently among those who are undoubtedly insane, and is often associated with dangerous and uncontrollable delusions."

This so-called test of insanity, which is the great source of contention at the present time, is generally said to have been laid down by the judges in their answers to the questions of the House of Lords in 1848. As these answers are constantly referred to, it will be well to look at them a little closer.

On March 5, 1848, Macnaughten was tried for the murder of Mr. Drummond, whom he had shot, mistaking him for Sir Robert Peel. The judges were the Lord Chief Justice Tindal and Justices Williams and Coleridge. Before the close the Lord Chief Justice stopped the trial and directed an acquittal on the ground of insanity. Great indignation was expressed on all sides at this result. It was said that the law was in fault which permitted it, and the House of Lords was urged to pass some Act which should better secure the punishment of such offenders. An important debate took place on March 18, in which the Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, Lords Brougham, Cottenham, and Campbell took part. The Chancellor asserted that the law wanted no alteration and deprecated any fresh legislation on the subject. "Your lordships," said he, "might pass such a law: you have the power to do so: but when you came for the first time to put it into execution, the sense of all, the feeling of all reasonable men, would revolt against it; and your lordships would be obliged to retrace your steps and to repeal the law which you had passed

in a moment of excited feeling in consequence of recent painful impressions, but which you could not have passed under the influence of sober and steady reason." And he then went on to state what the law is, and to quote the words of Mr. Justice Le Blanc, who, in 1812, tried a man who had been found lunatic by inquisition, and who had committed murder when undoubtedly insane. Justice Le Blanc told the jury, "If you should be of opinion that when he committed the offence he was capable of distinguishing right from wrong, and was not under the influence of such a delusion as disabled him from distinguishing that he was doing a wrong act, in that case he is answerable to the justice of his country and guilty in the eye of the law." The Lord Chancellor also quoted Chief Justice Mansfield, who, upon the trial of Bellingham, laid down the law in very similar terms. "Therefore," said his lordship, "there is no need of any change. Can your lordships say that if a man when he commits a crime is under the influence of delusion and insanity so as not to know right from wrong, so as not to know what he is doing, is it possible that your lordships can by any legislative provision say that such a man shall be responsible for his act?" Lord Brougham also deprecated any interference with the existing law, but he criticized severely the expression we so often hear, viz. the "knowing right from wrong." "One judge," said he, "lays down the law that a man is responsible if he is 'capable of knowing right from wrong.' Another says, 'if he is capable of distinguishing good from evil;' another, 'capable of knowing what was proper;' another, 'what was wicked.'" Lord Brougham said, "that he was not sure that the public at large 'knew right from wrong,' though their lordships knew that 'distinguishing right from wrong' meant a knowledge that the act a person was about to commit was punishable by law." The other lords discussed the questions which might be put to medical witnesses, and also the power which a judge had of stopping a case or directing a jury to acquit. The result of the debate was that the House acted on the Lord Chancellor's advice, "to leave the general law as it stands;" but certain questions were put to the whole bench of judges as to the application of the law, and as to the way in which certain questions might be put to witnesses. The readers of this Magazine may some of them never have seen these celebrated questions and answers, so I give them here with a few remarks upon them. On June 19, 1843, the House of Lords assembled to hear them read. The bench of judges were unanimous in their opinion upon them, with the exception of Mr. Justice Maule, who said, "I feel great difficulty in answering the questions put by your lordships on this occasion. First, because they do not appear to arise out of, and are not put with reference to, a particular case or for a particular purpose, which might explain or limit the generality of their terms, so that full answers to them ought to be applicable to every possible state of facts not inconsistent with those assumed in the question. This difficulty is the greater from the practical experience both of the bar and

of the court being confined to questions arising out of the facts of particular cases. Secondly, because I have heard no argument at your lordships' bar or elsewhere on the subject of these questions: the want of which I feel the more, the greater are the number and extent of questions which might be raised in argument. And thirdly, from a fear of which I cannot divest myself, that, as these questions relate to matters of criminal law of great importance and frequent occurrence, the answers to them by the judges may embarrass the administrators of justice when they are cited in criminal trials." In this last particular the fears of Mr. Justice Maule have been only too frequently realized.

In the name of the remaining judges, Lord Chief Justice Tindal said, "Her Majesty's judges deem it at once impracticable, and at the same time dangerous to the administration of justice, if it were practicable, to attempt to make minute applications of the principles involved in the answers given by them to your lordships' questions. They have, therefore, confined their answers to the statement of that which they hold to be the law upon the abstract questions proposed."

Question 1 was, What is the law respecting alleged crimes committed by persons afflicted with insane delusions in respect of one or more particular subjects or persons: as, for instance, where at the time of the commission of the alleged crime, the accused knew that he was acting contrary to the law, but did the act complained of with a view, under the influence of insane delusions, of redressing or revenging some supposed grievance or injury, or of producing some supposed public benefit?

Answer. The opinion of the judges was, that notwithstanding the party committing a wrong act, when labouring under an idea of redressing a supposed grievance or injury, or under the impression of obtaining some public or private benefit, he was liable to punishment.

In this first question, be it remarked, that the House of Lords acts upon Lord Brougham's suggestion, and makes knowledge that the law was broken the test of responsibility. It is also noteworthy that these very delusions, notwithstanding which a person is responsible, were those Macnaughten had whose trial was stopped by the same judge who read these answers.

Question 2. What are the proper questions to be submitted to the jury when a person alleged to be afflicted with insane delusions respecting one or more particular subjects or persons, is charged with the commission of a crime—murder, *e.g.*—and insanity is set up as a defence?

Answer. The jury ought to be told that every man should be considered of sound mind, unless it was clearly proved in evidence to the contrary. That before a plea of insanity should be allowed, undoubted evidence ought to be adduced that the accused was of diseased mind, and that at the time he committed the act he was not conscious of right or wrong. This opinion related to every case in which a party was charged with an illegal act, and a plea of insanity was set up. Every person was supposed to know what the law was, and therefore nothing could justify

a wrong act, except it was clearly proved the party did not know right from wrong. If that was not satisfactorily proved, the accused was liable to punishment, and it was the duty of the judges so to tell the jury, when summing up the evidence, accompanied with those remarks and observations which the nature and peculiarities of each case might suggest and require.

Here the judges use the two expressions synonymously, "knowledge of what the law is," and "knowledge of right and wrong." If they had kept to the first, as the House of Lords did in the questions, an immense deal of argument and confusion would have been saved. The answers throughout are not nearly so clear as the questions, and bear the marks of having been retouched by many hands.

Question 3. In what terms ought the question to be left to the jury as to the prisoner's state of mind at the time when the act was committed?

This is really the most important question of all, but the judges gave no answer to it; either not being agreed upon it, or deeming it not a question as to the law of the land, but rather as to the mode of procedure of the judge when summing up.

Question 4. If a person under an insane delusion as to existing facts commits an offence in consequence thereof, is he thereby excused?

Answer. That the judges are unanimous in opinion that if the delusion were only partial, the party accused was equally liable with a person of sane mind. If the accused killed another in self-defence he would be entitled to an acquittal; but if committed for any supposed injury, he would then be liable to the punishment awarded by the laws to his crime.

In this answer we have a very strange expression, viz. "partial delusion," which ought most certainly to have been explained. What it means no one can say. In all probability the notion of partial insanity, as it is sometimes called, is that which the judges intended to convey. With regard to their exposition of the law respecting delusions, the difficulty always is to ascertain in an insane mind whether we have got to the end of the delusions. The connexion between an ascertainable delusion and a given act is one which frequently the patient himself is unable to trace, still less can any one else.

The sentence, "If the accused killed another in self-defence," &c. is nonsense as it stands. The meaning obviously is, "If under a delusion he thinks another man is going to take away his life, and he kills that man, as he supposes, in self-defence," &c. This probably is an error of *The Times'* reporter.

Question 5. Can a medical man conversant with the disease of insanity, who never saw the prisoner previous to the trial, but who was present during the whole trial, and the examination of all the witnesses, be asked his opinion as to the state of the prisoner's mind at the time of the commission of the alleged crime, or his opinion whether the prisoner was sane at the time of doing the act that he was acting contrary to the law? or whether he was labouring under any and what delusion at the time?

Answer. The judges were of opinion that the question could not be put to the witness in the precise form stated above, for by doing so they would be assuming that the facts had been proved. That was a question which ought to go to the jury exclusively. When the facts were proved and admitted, then the question, as one of science, could generally be put to a witness under the circumstances stated in the interrogatory.

This question refers altogether to a matter of procedure, and arose out of the way in which certain witnesses had been examined on the trial of Macnaughten. The question, be it observed, still speaks of "consciousness of acting contrary to the law," and avoids, as the House of Lords does throughout, the expression "knowledge of right and wrong."

Of these questions and answers an eminent physician has said:—"It is probable that they can do little good and little harm; for not one of the able men engaged in their construction will be likely to do violence to his good sense or his humanity by allowing himself to be either restrained or constrained by them in opposition to trustworthy evidence of undoubted cerebro-mental disease." Of this I can only say, would it were so. They are supposed to be the authoritative exposition of the law as it affects the insane, as juries are constantly told. That they are a very imperfect exposition must be evident both to professional and lay readers. With the greatest deference to the illustrious bench and to the legal profession generally, I venture to point out some imperfections. The questions seem to have been put by the Lords with reference only to the trial of Macnaughten, and similar cases of delusional insanity. They appear to have arisen out of the debate in the House; and in the same way the answers seem to have been suggested by the opinions of former judges, quoted by the Lord Chancellor in his speech. There is a point which must be considered in every criminal case, which must be either directly or indirectly laid before every jury: this is, the freedom of the will of the accused person, be he of sound or unsound mind. The arraignment is for "wilful murder." An individual coerced in any way cannot be responsible. An individual whose volition is coerced by mental disease cannot be responsible. No one supposes, no one can suppose, that knowledge of what the law forbids, or knowledge of right and wrong, necessarily implies a perfect power of will, a perfect facility of choosing between right and wrong. Judges recognizing this truth have occasionally stumbled up in direct opposition to these answers. One said,— "It was not merely for them to consider whether the prisoner knew right from wrong, but whether he was at the time he committed the offence deranged or not." This question of sound or unsound will is not alluded to in any way in these answers of the judges. They cannot, therefore, be looked upon as a complete exposition of the law, but must be taken merely as an explanation of it in one particular.

I will now consider the opinion of an eminent lawyer of the present day, Mr. Fitzjames Stephen, who has published an extremely interesting paper on the subject in the volume of the Social Science Association for

1864. Mr. Stephen points out much confusion which exists in people's minds when they discuss this question, which is, Can a madman commit murder? What are the mental elements of the crime of murder? How far does the fact that a man is mad prove the absence of those elements, or any of them? The question whether a madman ought to be hanged is quite irrelevant; as is, of course, the whole question of capital punishment. Equally irrelevant is the question of procedure. How madness is to be established is quite a different thing from how it is to be dealt with when it is established. There is constantly a confusion between the evidence by which a proposition is proved, and the proposition to prove which the evidence is given. Madness is evidence of irresponsibility and incompetence, but does not constitute irresponsibility or incompetence. The issue in every criminal trial is, whether or not the act was wilful or malicious: the existence of madness would be evidence against will or malice. Thus limiting the subject, Mr. Stephen proceeds to show that the law is not to blame for the way in which it deals with questions of responsibility and mental competence in criminal cases. According to the law every crime has, as a rule, three moral conditions:—1. Its character as a voluntary act. 2. Knowledge of the character of the act. 3. Knowledge of the fact that the law forbids it. Of these the law presumes the presence of the last in every case. Mr. Stephen makes some remarks, however, on the other two. "The meaning of a wilful or voluntary act is a set of bodily motions preceded by an appropriate act of the will. This can be made no clearer, simply because the only evidence to be had on the subject is that which each of us carries about in his own person." This may be a sufficient definition for a lawyer; but the question of sound or unsound will is one of the greatest importance to the medical witness, who has to pronounce upon it according to the teaching of his science; and to pronounce upon it, not as he himself, but as the accused "carries it about in his person." Mr. Stephen's second moral condition is knowledge of the character of the act, differing from the judge's knowledge of right and wrong. This he confesses to be hard to define. If pushed to its limits, I think it means no more than his third—knowledge that the law forbids the act; for by fanatics and such like the character of an act may be firmly believed to be not criminal but righteous.

If a man has knowledge of either of these kinds, and the power to do or abstain from doing the act in question, he is competent and responsible in English law, and insanity comes into contact with law as a fact given in evidence by a party interested in rebutting the legal presumption of competency as applied to a particular case. This is Mr. Stephen's position, and it appears a perfectly good one. He afterwards goes on to apply this to cases of insanity, and especially to one form viz. delusional insanity. He gives three cases of crimes committed by persons under delusions. In two cases he says the delusions would excuse the crime. In the other, the lunatic would be responsible. He supposes

the delusion to be that the man's finger is made of glass; if we could remove the veil which conceals the operations of the mind, and trace them to their results, and we found that a murder was committed, not in consequence of this delusion, but from old-standing malice, and with the fullest knowledge of the nature of the act, the murderer would be responsible. But we never can look into the working of the mind; therefore the external facts alone form the evidence from which the mental elements of the action must be inferred. Mr. Stephen very wisely says nothing about the power of distinguishing right from wrong, but as it is often discussed, especially by lawyers, it will be as well to examine it briefly. We hear physicians, even psychological physicians, say that the insane, that is, the partially insane, or monomaniacs, as they are called, "know right from wrong," and that they are amenable to punishment. And not unfrequently it has been said that the order and discipline of asylums is maintained by acting on this principle—by a system of rewards and punishments, and that without such discipline a large number of lunatics could not be managed by a small staff of attendants. Here there is a small element of truth, and a large amount of error. It is not to be denied that certain psychologists who hold peculiar views as to the nature of insanity, have taught that it is to be cured by rebuke and threats and stripes. These physicians hold it to be a depraved condition of the spiritual essence, to be restored by moral treatment, *i.e.* rigour and punishment, not by medical treatment properly so called. But all modern research into the nature and pathology of mental disorder, tends to an opposite conclusion, and the whole tenor of the observations and suggestions of the Commissioners in Lunacy is to prevent anything like the application of punishment to insane patients. A large asylum is managed by a comparatively small number of officers, not because the many are afraid of the few, but because, though few, the officers are always many in respect of each one patient. The essential characteristic of insanity is that each insane patient is by his disease cut off and isolated from those around him. The combination of a number is a thing unknown. All sympathy with others, all power of uniting for a common object, is at an end. The insane live in an asylum, each self-centred, each constituting his own entire *cosmos*. There are many patients who conduct themselves quietly, and in most respects rationally, in an asylum. They are quite capable of criticizing the conduct of others; they are apparently conscious of right and wrong. Such patients have indulgences, recreations, and so on, according as they behave; and this has been called a system of rewards and punishments, but it is a system specially adapted to the insane, just as that which we apply to children is adapted to their mental calibre. For it is only supposed that they know right from wrong in a limited and clouded way. On points where their insanity causes misconduct, where they commit acts arising out of insane notions, no one even thinks of applying punishment in an asylum, still less of handing them over to the law. In a recent article in *The*

Times, an interesting account was given of a number of homicidal patients confined in the State Asylum at Broadmoor. If an attack is made on an attendant by one of these, no one would think of punishing the patient or of handing him over to the police. Some patients are perpetually attempting suicide, who tell you every day they know that it is very wicked. Another is ever on the alert to set fire to the house; another will steal; another will destroy everything he can; yet in the abstract all these patients know right from wrong. English lawyers base all their dogmas on the assumption that insanity is a lesion of the intellectual faculties only, but this is a very antiquated psychology. Over and over again we read in the speeches of counsel and in the summing-up of judges, that "delusion is the true character of insanity. That where it cannot be predicated of a man standing for life or death for a crime, he ought not to be acquitted."* Yet the ablest psychologists of this and foreign countries are of opinion that intellectual lesion, in the majority of cases, is a secondary phenomenon following lesion of some other portion of the mental or bodily organism. This is not the place for a medical treatise on insanity, but I cannot help mentioning certain classes of cases, and very different ones, in each of which homicide is the chief or a frequent symptom. We may divide them thus:—

I.—Cases in which there is an ascertainable loss or aberration of intellect.

II.—Cases in which the intellect is apparently unaffected.

I.—In the first group we must place all cases from total loss of mind down to what is called monomania, evidenced by perhaps a single delusion.

1. And first in this group we place the idiot, who, as Lord Coke says, is from his nativity by a perpetual infirmity *non compos mentis*. The idiot may commit murder from wanton mischief or utter folly. But in extreme cases the idiocy will be apparent, and the accused would probably be always found insane on arraignment. Cases, however, not of unmitigable idiocy, but of congenital weakness of intellect or imbecility, often give rise to much contention. Not long after Mr. Drummond was murdered, a man named Higginson was tried before Mr. Justice Maule. His imbecility was sworn to by the surgeon and all the officers of the prison, but he was hanged nevertheless.

2. There may be loss of mind, *dementia*, not congenital, but the result of brain disease.

3. There may be raving madness, mania, frenzy, which will be at once evident to judge and jury. In these forms, extreme idiocy, dementia, and raving mania, the accused cannot be supposed to have true volition, or to know the true character of his act.

4. We next find delusional insanity, which is the form about which there has been most debate, and the only one discussed by the judges as coming under the denomination of monomania or partial insanity. The

* Mr. Erskine.—Trial of Hadfield.

subjects of the most celebrated trials have been for the most part cases of delusional insanity. Lawyers go so far as to say that the delusion and the act must be connected to deliver from responsibility. But this is what can never be done. It is false philosophy and false psychology to attempt to do it.

Instead of delusions proper, we may find hallucinations or illusions. As regards the legal question, these all come under the same category. In all these states of mind, homicide may be and has been committed most frequently under the influence of delusion or hallucination.

II.—In the second division are to be placed several classes of homicidal insanity, in which no intellectual deficiency or aberration is discoverable, and these are the great difficulties for the bench, the bar, and the jury. These are the cases which have caused the greatest outcry, where it has been said that mad doctors have set up what they have termed *moral* or *impulsive insanity* as a mere excuse, and where the whole trial has been looked upon as a farce. The phrase *moral insanity* in no way conveys a true or adequate idea of these mental states. In the majority of them there is disease of some nerve-centre, recognizable by those who study such diseases, though they will hardly convince a jury of it. Many of them are analogous to certain bodily diseases, also connected with nerve-centres.

1. First, we may mention one where the bodily and mental disease seem as it were to meet, where not unfrequently the one takes the place of the other. This is epileptic insanity. Cases are on record of furious homicidal attacks, which followed close upon an attack of epilepsy. Others are related where the epilepsy ceased, and in place of it a disturbance of mental cerebral action arose, so that instead of an epileptic fit a sudden fit of homicidal insanity manifested itself. These are cases where, by cerebral disorder, phenomena are produced which are closely allied to the convulsive action of epilepsy, and during which volition, and the consciousness of right and wrong, and of the character of the act, are for the time suspended.

2. Take another class of cases somewhat akin to the foregoing. Often in women, and occasionally in men, we meet with a short transient attack of violent mania, which has been called *hysterical* or *transitory* mania. If, as not unfrequently happens, a person commits homicide in one of these short paroxysmal attacks, few would be able a week afterwards to find enough insanity in him, from mere personal examination, to deliver him from responsibility when tried before a jury. When the paroxysm has passed off, such persons are often unaware of what has happened. On the other hand, they sometimes feel its approach, and beg to be restrained; nay, will even tie themselves, that they may commit no violence.

3. We find a number of people whose whole insanity is a homicidal impulse; who feel it, not occasionally but constantly; and who will put it in practice whenever opportunity offers. It is a chronic desire to kill.

Many thought Macnaughten ought to have been hanged, because he showed purpose and design ; but these men will lay their plans for weeks and months. Witness the man who hid his knife under the floor, as related in *The Times'* article on the Broadmoor Asylum. Most asylum officers can point to cases of this sort ; to patients who show no other insanity, but are known to have made homicidal attack after attack, and who have probably inherited the disease. In fact, this last class is generally hereditary.

4. Arising also from hereditary taint, homicidal insanity sometimes shows itself in quite young children—children of seven and eight years of age. These paroxysmal attacks of violence are valuable lessons in mental disease. They ought to teach us much which will assist us in the appreciation of disordered brain action as we find it in adults. They ought to teach us, and teach juries, that we must look to facts, and not to our own fancied and subjective consciousness of right and wrong.*

These, then, are the conditions of a crime on which evidence has to be given before a jury. Was the prisoner's *volition*, his power of abstaining from the act, in a sound or a diseased state when he committed it ? Secondly, had he at the same time an adequate knowledge of the character of his act ? Did he, in plain words, know what he was about ? - On these, which are both questions of mental science, evidence must be given which will enable the jury to form an opinion on the responsibility of the accused, which is the issue for them. The law, then, being perfectly clear, and the so-called legal tests of responsibility being also clear—supposing these tests, and not half of them, are properly applied—where is the fault, whence arises the scandal, the dissatisfaction, the contradiction which prevails whenever a criminal trial takes place involving the question of insanity ? Clearly it must be due to the mode of procedure. Let us for a moment contrast the practice in this respect in civil and criminal cases. The commonest civil case is a commission *de lunatico inquirendo*. Here is tried the competency of an individual to manage his property. Consider what safeguards the law throws around him. First, a petition must be presented to the Lord Chancellor or the Lords Justices, and *prima facie* evidence given on affidavit that the party is a lunatic. When this petition is granted, and an inquiry ordered, the alleged lunatic may demand that it be held before a jury, which jury will be a special jury. I need not remind my readers of the difference between the decision of a special and that of a common jury, when such a question as mental disease has to be investigated. Either the Commissioner is a Master in Lunacy, whose whole attention is given to such cases, or the Lord Chancellor may, if he think fit, direct that it shall be tried before a judge of one of the superior courts of common law. The counsel are men who are supposed to have practised specially in such inquiries. In fact, the whole

* See an article by Dr. Maudsley on "Homicidal Insanity," in No. 47 of the *Journal of Mental Science*.

court is adapted and devised to well and truly try the important question whether A. B. is, or is not, competent to manage himself and his affairs. Nor is this all. The alleged lunatic is examined personally and orally before the jury; and so they have the opportunity of testing the truth and falsehood of what is said of him.

Now look at a criminal trial. An insane man kills some one, and in a few days perhaps he is put on his trial for wilful murder. The assize town may be obscure and remote; he may be poor, far too poor to pay for any defence. If his insanity is not patent and undoubted, most probably he will be hanged without the slightest chance of his case being properly investigated. Some barrister will be asked to defend him, but he will not be able to procure scientific evidence at a moment's notice. Bellingham, who shot Mr. Perceval, was an undoubted lunatic. He shot him about five o'clock on Monday afternoon, May 11th. At the same hour of Monday, May 18th, seven days after, his body was in the dissecting-room. Chief Justice Mansfield refused to postpone the trial, though affidavits were made that evidence could be procured from Liverpool which would certainly prove him to be insane. The prisoner then will be found guilty, and next comes the question whether the trial shall be turned into a farce by the case being reheard in the Home Secretary's office, or whether he shall be hanged forthwith.

But supposing the accused is not a pauper, but a man of means, and can pay for a defence, how does it stand with him? Witnesses are called for the defence: but these are notoriously *ex-parte* witnesses, paid witnesses, who are retained, as are the counsel, for the defence. And on the other side the prosecution ranges its witnesses, also *ex-parte* witnesses, who say that the prisoner knows right from wrong. The Lord Chancellor in his speech on Macnaughten's trial stated that two medical gentlemen watched the case on behalf of the Crown, but took the view of the witnesses for the defence. These gentlemen were not put in the witness-box at all. These witnesses are of course all *experts*, men versed in insanity; but besides these there are generally called by the Crown certain medical men, not practising amongst the insane, but following the general walk of their profession, who, however, in the eyes of a jury are equally doctors, equally experts. A juryman in a country town thinks his own doctor, who doctors his wife and family, quite as good, or a great deal better, than "those mad doctors." And the doctor does not trouble the jury with any views about *volition* or *knowledge*, but he says "he doesn't see any insanity in the man," which is quite true. Trial by jury is a great institution, but trial of perhaps the very hardest point of all science or philosophy by a country common jury is pushing things a long way. Mr. Fitzjames Stephen in the before-mentioned paper says:—"It is not to be denied that so long as great ignorance exists upon matters of physical and medical science in all classes, physicians will occasionally have to submit to the mortification of seeing not only the jury, but the bar and bench itself, receive, with scornful incredulity or self-satisfied ignorance,

evidence which ought to be received with respect and attention." And a no less eminent physician says:—"The English public have a natural fondness for trial by jury, and like to be hanged or acquitted, as the case may be, through their peers, however incompetent and casually chosen, rather than on any other terms. But in the above class of cases the interest at stake and the distinction between madness and badness are far too fine for so coarse a tribunal. The philosopher, indeed, cannot fail to observe, that the views both of judges and advocates are insensibly lowered down to the dimensions of the very incompetent body on whom the decision ultimately rests."

There is another circumstance which tends to increase the doubt and difficulty arising in criminal trials where insanity is pleaded: this is their rarity and the magnitude of the crime. Acts of violence and breaches of the peace are of course committed every day by the insane; but these, for the most part, never come before a jury. They are virtually tried by the magistrates, if they get so far as them; and by them they are sent to asylums, or are given over to the custody of their friends. Every asylum contains patients who have committed breaches of the law of various kinds, but have never been brought to trial. So that the cases which do come before a jury are either cases of homicide, which cannot be disposed of in any other way, or cases where the insanity is very doubtful, and where the plea is looked on with great suspicion, as in the so-called cases of *kleptomania*, &c. The consequence of this is, that juries seldom see genuine and undoubted cases of insanity in persons charged with minor offences, but they chiefly have to deal with startling and terrible cases of homicide, about which men's minds are greatly roused, and where all the feeling about capital punishment and the like comes in. If juries recognized insanity frequently in the former class of offenders, they would be more prepared to recognize it in insane persons charged with a capital offence, and less disposed to look upon it merely as an excuse to avoid the punishment due to such a crime.

If, then, the law is not at fault, if the whole difficulty with regard to this question is one of procedure, it will not be difficult to find the remedy. Good and sufficient evidence must be given, and this must be laid before the jury with a scientific weight and method that is altogether wanting now. Above all, the scientific evidence must be preserved from the stigma, which is always attached to it now, of being altogether *ex parte* and paid. That independent evidence is of great weight, is shown by this incident. When Macnaughten was tried, in addition to the witnesses who were retained for the defence, two medical men, Messrs. Aston Key and Winslow, volunteered their evidence as independent witnesses, and the Chief Justice when summing up said—"We feel the evidence, especially that of the two last medical gentlemen, who are strangers to both sides, and only observers of the case, to be very strong, and sufficient to induce my learned brother and myself to stop the case."

The witnesses in such cases should be officers of the State, as indepen-

dent as are the Commissioners in Lunacy themselves, who shall give such evidence upon the trial as shall satisfy the court, the jury, and the public, and put a stop to any demand that a case shall be reheard. This suggestion is not new, but it is in reality the only one that can be made. If such assessors or State witnesses were appointed, we should not be told by Lord Chancellors "that it is not necessary a man should have studied the subject of insanity in order to form a conclusion whether a man is or is not a lunatic." They should be men who, by their scientific reputation, their character and position, would satisfy both juries and the public that their opinion ought to be listened to. I do not presume to lay down the exact mode in which such a scheme might be carried out. Doubtless difficulties will arise, and will present themselves to a legal mind. But there are none which may not be overcome. The principle is not new, either in this country or in others. The Trinity brethren are called in, in this way. In France, no trial where the plea of insanity is raised, is concluded without reference to experts. It will be long, however, before we can rival France in the treatment of disputed questions of science. In France a man of science is looked upon as a man of rank and mark. Here he is only a practising physician, who is perforce retained as a witness on this side or that, who is paid to give his evidence, and whose evidence is looked upon as worth just that which is paid for it. When a murder is committed, and the plea of insanity raised, the Crown ought to commission its experts to examine the accused, his history and antecedents, and sufficient time should be allowed for this to be done thoroughly. Such experts assisting the court would analyze the evidence given for the defence, and would control the questions put by counsel to witnesses, which are often simply nonsensical, and lead to still more nonsensical answers. If the accused were really insane, it would be the duty of such assessors to expound his insanity to the jury independently of the witnesses for the defence.

Lawyers are much afraid that doctors wish to usurp the functions of the bench, the bar, and the jury. Doctors, however, wish nothing of the sort. The great mass of medical men do not in the least degree desire to be called as witnesses in these cases. They would be glad that the honour of the whole profession should be spared the scandals which constantly arise out of the present system of procuring evidence, and they would gladly depute to the chosen few of their order the task of assisting the officers of the Crown. Some lawyers deny that medical men are the best judges of insanity. They maintain that it is a subject on which others are as competent to give an opinion as doctors. But it is true that mental science has progressed just so far as it has owed in the aid of physiology. Notoriously the most eminent of living thinkers and writers on psychological subjects, are they who have most studied human and comparative physiology, and as mental science is a question of physiology, so is mental disease a question of pathology; and when a medical witness is examined in a court of justice, his evidence must not consist of statements of his own ideas on insanity or depravity, or metaphysical disquisitions on right

or wrong, but he must be able to say, from his knowledge and experience, whether in the accused there are, or are not, symptoms of disease, of diseased brain structure, or function, of which he can give a diagnosis such as he would give to other medical men, such as he would give in any other case,—a diagnosis based on the history, age, antecedents, and physical appearance of the individual, hereditary tendency, previous disorders, accidents, or the like. Evidence like this alone is valuable, and if not *ex parte*, would be convincing to all. One reason why lawyers are so bitter against doctors is that they are totally powerless, unless assisted, to detect the medical fallacies propounded by witnesses for the defence. Witness the trials of Palmer and Smethurst, and many of those where the plea of insanity has been set up. If scientific assessors had been assisting the court, we should never have heard some of the theories which, on different occasions, have been put forward.

One word in conclusion. People in the present day are very fond of boasting of the modern treatment of the insane. We don't shut them up now in gloomy bastilles; we don't fasten them to a bar by a sliding chain; nay, we don't even put them in strait-waistcoats; yet it is much to be feared that of the real nature of insanity men's knowledge is but little advanced, while their feelings towards "lunatics" are much what they were a great many years ago. Most people would far rather that they were buried as dead out of their sight. Hear the experience of those who at any time have taken some half-dozen patients to a sea-side place—patients orderly, well-dressed, tranquil—the very class which lawyers call the "partially insane." Straightway the whole town rises in arms, and threats and imprecations are bestowed upon the "mad doctor" who dares to bring his lunatics betwixt the wind and the visitors' nobility. Folks think of them as pariahs and outcasts, and stare at them as if each was a Macnaughten. If the late Mr. Van Amburgh had walked every morning on the beach with his feline troupe, he would have excited far more interest and no more fear. But if one of these same lunatics, by reason of his lunacy, slays a man, Society rises and exclaims, "He knows right from wrong: let him be hanged."

A Holiday in Venice.

VENICE, like many other beautiful widows, is not indisposed sometimes to throw off her weeds, and to display her singular and almost unparalleled beauty adorned as becomes it. She has mourned long, and there are rumours (no idle scandal, I believe,) that a younger, nobler, more powerful bridegroom, will ere long claim her. Meanwhile, though still in mourning when I saw her for the first time, an accidental circumstance revealed her to me, much as she might have appeared in the glorious days of old, and as she hopes, and we all hope, she again may one day be.

The old Venetian festivals were usually held in the open air. The three elements which, so magically transfused into each other, make Venice (air, sky, and water), were all called upon to contribute to the pleasures of the Venetians. Music and dancing and suppers, &c. &c. were rarely enjoyed between four walls. The softness of the luxurious climate, the splendour of its glittering nights, had a part in all their amusements. To all invitations to sing, to sup, or to play were added the words "al fresco," and finally "fresco" was the word used to indicate all festivals.

On the 12th of May, the second evening, I think, after our arrival, we left the hotel with the mere expectation, exquisite as that of itself was, of spending a quiet moonlight night on the water. The gondola shot from the steps of the garden, and for a few minutes we seemed to be alone on the canal. Above, was the soft darkness of the sky; around, a shimmering haze of transparent air, pregnant of stars soon to be born; below, the liquid shining blackness, through which we cut our way. But suddenly, far off, we heard sounds of music, and then, as if evoked by the sound, there floated slowly towards us a train of luminous apparitions; gondolas, with rows of coloured lamps of every tint and shape, slung to the square rods of the awnings, and rowed by gondoliers in their holiday costume of white, with particoloured sashes looped up at the sides. We inquired what it was. It was a "fresco" in honour of some Austrian princess, who had arrived that afternoon, and was going to leave the next morning. The military bands had been ordered to serenade her, and this was the result.

The effect was beautiful. The two illuminated barges containing the two orchestras were moored, one at the Rialto and one at the Piazzetta, and it seemed as if beds of gay flowers were gliding down the canal, from end to end, between two lofty variegated banks; or as if a flight of those fairy birds, with silver beaks and peacock tails, of which Eastern stories tell us, were fluttering to and fro their jewelled nests over a magic lake. Without volition or apparent motion, and led on

only by this chord of melody, we followed the other boats. It was like a *pas de fascination*. Siren echoes sucked us in, as in a vortex, but happily to no tragical issue.

All the palaces occupied by foreigners were illuminated. Those inhabited by Venetians were fast shut. But the music was Italian, though played by Austrians in honour of an Austrian, and must have penetrated triumphantly within those barred shutters and closed jealousies. It is, after all, to the conquered that the conquerors owe all that refines, solaces, and exalts their lives. Art and nature are still noblest and fairest here, and from this primacy no Teuton or Gaul can degrade the Italians.

So, vibrating to the Rialto from the Piazzetta, from the Piazzetta to the Rialto, we passed the night. From the wondrous single arch which curves over the Grand Canal, and which, illuminated as it then was, lifted its glittering crescent as a barrier against the East, to the marvellous palace which yet retained the flush of sunset on its walls, majestic, steadfast, and prophetic, the vanguard of the West, the whole history of Venice was enclosed between those two limits, and now, as ever, those extreme points were linked together by a wreath of pleasure. Then there was a pause, the music ceased, and the bond was broken. The crowd of boats, like a broken necklace, dropped, bead by bead, asunder, and were dispersed.

In no other city of the world could such a fête have been improvised on such a short notice. But the Venetians have an indolent adaptability to all that is called pleasure which is peculiarly their own. Are they not the descendants of that people who kept festival for the space of one whole year on the accession, in 1423, of Foscari to the Dogeship? Poor Foscari! did he recall that time, when, thirty-four years later, he stood on the great staircase, listening to the clanging of the bell which announced that (he yet living) Venice had chosen another Doge?

This city took possession of heart and mind and memory as none other has ever done; and though I may never see it again, I should be able after any length of time, to look back on recollections of it, clear, defined, and glowing as its own pictures, or crystallized into marvellous fragments, like the glittering slides of a kalcidoscope.

It is not, however, the Venice which defied the Pope and fought the infidel, not the queenly Venice of Philip de Comynes, with its marble palaces inlaid with porphyry and serpentine, its mosaics and its gems, not the Venice of Tintoret and Titian, not the Venice of Shakespeare and Otway and Goethe and Byron, which was so livingly impressed on me, but the Venice of Arlecchino and Brighella, of Pantalone and the doctor, the Venice which masqued itself during the whole carnival, and crowded the Piazza di San Marco with Ciarlatani and Pantaloni and Illustrissimi and Tati, and danced and sung, along the new and old procuratie, the Venice that moved, breathed, and lived in pleasure, where *cafés* remained open all night long, and rappers and serenades and comedies filled the

hours from sunset to sunrise—in short the Venice of Goldoni, the Venice of Galuppi, the Venice

Where young people took their pleasure when the sea was warm in May.
Balls and masks begun at midnight burning ever to midday.*

It is always the fashion to connect Italy with daggers and secret societies and revolutions in the present, and mediæval triumphs in the past, but there is also a middle region which is less known to us.

The man who being asked to describe Italian landscape, made a succinct classification of its trees, by saying, he had seen nothing but umbrellas open and umbrellas shut, would describe its history under the same limitations. And yet, besides pines and cypresses are vines and olives, and between the lofty glories of the past and the dark shadows of the first part of the present century, is a period which as naturally grew out of the former, and alas! led to the latter, as the tree passes from the virile verdure of spring to the brilliant hectic of autumn, and from thence to the withered ghastliness of winter.

The best records of the Venice of this period are to be found in the plays and memoirs of Goldoni. Goldoni was born in 1707 during the brief dogeship of Alvise Mocenigo. His memoirs are charming. His life was joyous, lively, fortunate throughout. He was a good son, brother, husband, and an indulgent and faithful friend. In spite of the impressionability of his nature, and the laxity of morals which was permitted to young men at that time, his shrewdness of temper as well as his soundness of principle kept him pure from all grossness or prodigality in his diversions. But what a picture of sparkling Bohemian enjoyment he paints for us in this autobiography. Wherever we open the genial pages we find such records as:—

"We there passed four months with the greatest delight in the world;" or, "I there parted from the pleasantest persons in all Italy." From the time in the early chapters when he describes a "flight" he made from college with some actors he had made acquaintance with at Rimini, and gives us details, graphic as a chromo-lithograph, of the journey from Rimini to Chioggia, or, as he calls it, Chiozza, the book is a succession of spirited scenes. "Our company consisted of twelve men and women, dogs, cats, monkeys, parrots, birds, doves, and a lamb; in short, a perfect Noah's ark. And we passed three days of continual enjoyment—such breakfasts, such dinners, such music, such laughter, and such flirtations! The actresses were pretty, and there was a dear little girl among them who always acted the part of the servant in their representations, for whose sake I have ever since had a tenderness for waiting-maids on the stage, and such a prima donna!" The account of his arrival, of his friend the manager leaving the truant in the ante-room while he prepared Madame Goldoni, his mother, to receive him, and the manner in which, having forgiven him for his escapade, the kind mother threw herself in the breach to obtain pardon from his father, is full of humour. The father thought

* Browning.

it his duty to be severe at first, but gradually as the names of the accomplices were revealed (they happened to be some far-famed comedians,) the old Adam awoke in the avvocato Goldoni's breast, and after awful denunciations on his son, he was startled, then interested, then charmed by these names, and finally went himself with his prodigal to the theatre. All this is told in as admirable a scene as could be found in any comedy.

Rather later is another journey, which seems literally to verify Gray's famous line—

Youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm.

He and a company of eight other young men went by water from Pavia to Chioggia. They were all musicians but himself. Three played on the violin, there were two oboes, there was a French-horn, a violoncello, and a guitar, and Goldoni composed the songs, or declaimed poetical descriptions of their daily life. On each bank of the Po, crowds followed the barque, listening to the music, and as payment for the pleasure given by them, wherever they stopped to pass the night, they were received with the most courteous hospitality, and suppers and balls given in their honour. Then, with what quiet irony he tells us of his college life, under the Padre Candini, "who professed all the virtues, as well as the science of scholastic logic, and was such a bore. His digressions, his scholastic twists, seemed to me useless; and his Barbara and Baralipon, ridiculous. A more useful, and certainly a more pleasant philosophy I found in Plautus, Terence, Aristophanes, and in fragments of Menander. In short, the philosophy which was then taught to the young, was eternally that of St. Thomas Aquinas, or of Scotus; the peripatetic, or the mixed; and each and all only seemed to me, to remove me further from the philosophy of common sense."

There is also something very naïf and thoroughly Venetian in the ecstasy with which he describes a season of perfect rest he spent at Genoa after a very hardworked period at Venice. "Oh!" he says from his heart, "how sweet it is, after having worked very hard, to pass a short time *doing nothing*. He is not ashamed of enjoying absolute idleness. And yet he was a good worker. Two hundred dramatic productions, comedies, burlettas, operas, dramas, bear his name. He was not an heroic person at all, nor a great genius, but he was beloved by his friends and relatives, and an author of great versatility, quick wit, buoyant humour and polished satire. *

His comedies are written in pithy, incisive, easy dialogue. His personages talk brilliantly and naturally. He made admirable use of his native dialect in some of his plays. The plots are closely knit and well unravelled. If the intrigue and the scope of them seem to turn on conventional proprieties, or commonplace virtues, we must remember it was the age *par excellence* of decorous platitudes and arithmetical morality. If so much was foregone on earth, so much was bestowed in heaven. It was the age of the *Taffer* and the *Spectator*. It is amusing to think how our

loved and gentle Addison penetrated even to Venice, and that in those balconies with their twisted pillars, and elaborate iron-work, and marble inlaid cornices, lovely ladies bent over the sparkling pages, caught a faint reflection of their spirit, tried forthwith to instruct themselves, and in the intervals between coffee and love-making began to babble a soft philosophy to their lovers.

In estimating Goldoni's dramatic powers, we must remember the primitive and barbaric state in which he found the stage. In some parts of Italy, and throughout the Pontifical territory, the female parts were acted by youths and not women. It was then the custom to write *commedie di braccio*: plays in which the plots were settled, the parts cast, the knot to be cut through explained, and the actors were then left to improvise the rest.

Four personages were always indispensable, whatever might be the subject of the play, whoever were the hero and heroine, and wherever was the *mise en scène*: Pantalone, the Venetian merchant (the *père noble*), the doctor, a Bolognese advocate, Brighella and Arlecchino, Bergamesque servants. Brighella was a knave and a rogue, Arlecchino a butt and a fool.

The very dresses were traditional, and all wore masks. Pantalone was from time immemorial dressed in the old Venetian costume, black, with scarlet shirt, tights, and stockings.

The doctor wore the costume of the University of Bologna. So faithful was the clothing of this type, that the disfiguring stain on the brow and nose of the mask was religiously adhered to, because a famous ancient lawyer of Bologna had a port-wine mark.

Brighella's mask was almost black; a caricature of the sun-burned complexions of the poor peasants in the rugged and scorching country round Bergamo. There were varieties of Brighelli called Finocchio, Fichetti, Scappini, but under whatever name he appeared he was invariably a thief, a liar, and a Bergamesque.

The Arlecchini were called sometimes Traccagnini, Truffaldini, Graddellini, and Mezzettini, but they were always dolts and beggars. Their particoloured costume was the representation of the different rags and scraps with which such persons clothe themselves, and the hare's-tail which ornaments them is even now used by the contadini in the neighbourhood of Bergamo.

The ladies'-maid who played such an important part as an inferior *Deus ex machina* in these entertainments, was invariably represented as a Florentine. Tuscan piquancy and astuteness being much valued by the bland Venetians.

It was Goldoni who first gradually emancipated himself from these restrictions. The necessity of four strongly-characterized and eternally identical personages, the use of the mask, so destructive to the verisimilitude of the acting, were odious to him; and though, to please some of his friends, he occasionally wrote comedies of this kind with four obligato

personages, travestied by masks, and allowed actors to improvise the dialogue, all his principal works were written according to the more wholesome and modern canons of dramatic composition. Anglo-Saxon nations can scarcely know what a power the stage is in the South. It took, and it still takes, the place of the imaginative literature which holds so large a space in the intellectual movement of Northern nations. Many of Goldoni's plays still keep the stage, one hundred years and more after they have been written, and those who have seen them well acted, cannot be surprised that they do so. They are not cynical, they do not touch the solemn depths of human character which Molière's sublime humour sounded, but they are racy and bright, and full of wit and mirth and incident, and unspeakably cheerful and good-humoured. It was this feeling that I was treading the Venice of Goldoni that made me take great pleasure in the by-paths of Venice, and I haunted chiefly the smaller canals and less known streets.

These, with their innumerable one-arched bridges, dropped like rings half in and half out of the water, and their numerous involutions and intersections, I used to thread with unfailing perseverance and interest. In all these streets the houses are more or less dilapidated; but, nevertheless, the eye cannot fail to notice, even in the most ruined-looking, some quaint fragment of cornice, or balcony, or parapet of exquisite workmanship, or graceful proportion, from which *à la Cuvier* you can build up the whole edifice, and ascertain the status of its former inhabitants. One of these I remember in the far-off regions of Sta. Maria dell' Orto, a house with balconies and curiously-arched windows. The ironwork of these balconies, though rusty and broken, yet retained a portion of their carving, and had been cut into arabesques of the lightest and most intricate design. They would have ravished the soul of a connoisseur. The grimy wooden shutters, though broken and pieced, were powerless to impart an air of vulgarity to the windows. Of their kind, these were matchless. The barred apertures of the lower floor looked eyeless and blank, but even there the ghastliness was veiled by the elaborate festoons and draperies and embroideries of a million powdery cobwebs. The stone parapet and the marble inlaid wall of the house were irreparably injured, but running along the façade on a level with the second story from the water was an alto-relievo, half defaced and obliterated, but which must have been of great antiquity. All that were left, and these were very rudely carved, were a palm-tree and a dromedary. Surely this must have been the abode in the good days long ago of some wealthy Don Leandro, with a purse full of golden zechins, made by trade in the East. What vistas of burning deserts and toiling caravans, of patient industry and daring enterprise, of the virtues and qualities which formed the corner-stone on which was reared the great republic, were brought to mind by that ruined sculpture.

I remember another. I passed it one gorgeous summer evening when the sky was all crimson and gold. It was a dark funeral cortège house,

linked by a bridge to a side street, in which were a few shops. All the upper part of the house seemed the abode of mice and of spiders, but in the centre was one exquisite lozenge-paned window, with a perfect shrine of inlaid marble over it, and supported by slender pillars barely projecting a hand's breadth from the wall. An orange-striped awning hung partly over it, and threw a tawny shadow on an auburn-haired girl leaning out with a carnation on her temple, and her large lazy white hands folded over the crimson cushions of the window-sill. In every corner of Italy one finds these exquisite bits of picturesqueness, but Venice is the consecrated home of that seven-robed daughter of light which men call colour.

How could it be otherwise beneath that sky, and girdled by those lucid shallows? All the senses but one are eternally gratified in Venice, and that is only offended for a brief season. During the heat of summer beware of exploring the narrow canals in the heart of the city. If you do, you will, according to the courteous Spanish euphuism, "sniff that which is not precisely 'limoncello.'" But in the early spring, when the sunshine traces its bright Oriental characters in scintillating flow on the freshening lagoon; when every Venetian girl places her flower-pots on window-ledge and balcony; when every old palace-wall and arched basement wears a clothing of tender green, and there is a perfume of carnations in the air, and the murmurous water lapses against the far-off sea-wall with a sound as of a distant hum of bees, and the nightingales call from their leafy cages across the "traghetto," and caress each other with their ravishing song—then, own that every sense is blessed, and that it is good to be at Venice.

The Venetians talk less than other Italians, and when they do speak, their voices are agreeable. They are felicitously deprived of the dust and ashes which parch the throat and thicken the utterance of other nations, and they have softened their own soft Italian to a velvety idiom which is like a spoken caress. It is this silence and this absolute freedom from dust which makes Venice such a boon to hypochondriacal or neuralgic patients.

In spite, or perhaps more truly, on account of the softness of the climate, and the effeminacy which the habits of life of such a city involved, the Venetians deified vigour, manliness, and strength. To them these qualities were godlike. In other countries brutal habits enshrined purity, delicacy, sweetness; and the worship and delineation of the Madonna preponderated over that of Christ. Here churches, pictures, altars, are chiefly dedicated to Christ and to his saints. Out of sixty churches only five are devoted to the Madonna, and three to female saints. In the galleries, both private and public, one oftener sees our Saviour painted as man than as babe; oftener, I mean, in proportion to such pictures of Him in other countries. A cursory glance at any catalogue will prove this. In St. Mark's, Christ and the cross are the dominant ideas. The mosaics and the scrolls bear witness to this. The altar in

the chapel of St. Maria dei Mascoli, though actually dedicated to the Virgin, and bearing on its priceless walls the most exquisite mosaics in the church, depicting her birth, presentation, visitation, and death, is another instance of this loftier religious feeling. On the parapet of the altar is a beautiful *basso-relievo*—two angels waving censers over the cross.

But even more than by the wonders of Tintoretto and Titian and Bonifazio was I riveted by those quaint pictures of Gentile Bellini and Vittorio Carpaccio which represent, the former, the old Piazza di San Marco (before the clock-tower and the third story of the old procuratie were built, with the addition of the old mosaics and gilding of the Basilica, and a large addition to the western side of the Campanile, of the existence of which some traces still remain), and the latter the old Rialto bridge of wood with its booths and gates, and which then, from the tolls levied there, was also called Ponte del Bajutin. It was especially interesting to me to compare this old Venice with the new.

There is nothing more beautiful than the Piazza St. Marco. It is like reading a marvellous history to walk up and down it. Its deathless interest arises from its combination of the past with the present, linked together by the living human element which circulates for ever under every vicissitude of government beneath its arcades and arches. In Pisa, the dome, the baptistery, and the sepulchre stand apart in their grass-grown desolation, and the whole city seems a mournful monument of a dead faith and a buried civilization; here the mortal consecrates and immortalizes the spiritual; here the living mingle the humours, the sorrows, and the joys of this life with the church, the palace, and the clock-tower; and Faith, and Law, and Time, are old, yet ever young, linked to Eternity, age after age, by the deathless life of humanity. Enter that piazza at any time, and you will be interested, from the earliest dawn to the late night. But perhaps the happiest moment is when the whole spot is basking in the glory of the shadowless noon, when the Byzantine mosaics of the church are shining like jewels, and its pinnacles and spires lift up their white beauty to the blue heaven, and the ground is one golden sheet of sunlight, and the pigeons cluster together like an iris-hued fleece over the dome, or swoop in purple masses on the pavement, raising their dainty heads and gem-encircled throats to listen, as the bronze Moors on the clock-tower strike the hour. At all hours notice the motley groups around you, with all their oddities and peculiarities exhibited in the frank, impulsive manner common to all Italians. Observing them, we can well understand how Goldoni used to find subjects for his plays here. In fact, he tells us that being very much hurried to write a play which he had promised for the end of the Carnival, and finding that the penultimate Sunday had arrived and it was not written, he betook himself to the piazza, in the hope that some passing "*maschera*" or "*ciarlatano*" would suggest a subject to him. "I found myself," he says, "at last standing under the clock-tower, and there in five minutes a man passed who exactly fulfilled

the object I required. An old Armenian, with a long beard and clothed most dirtily and shabbily, who sold dates and dried fruits, which he called 'abagigi.' He was so inveterately assiduous in his trade that he obtained the nickname of Abagigi, and his appearance was so ridiculous that it became customary in Venice, among the 'gamins,' to tease any pretty girl by proposing Abagigi to her as a husband. As soon as I saw him I was quite contented, and went home and wrote a play, which, under the name of *Le Pettegolezze* (Scandal), had a great success."

It was one of my perpetual marvels that in all these respects Venice was so little changed. The piazza still overflowed with subjects which would have been the fortune of a playwright; comedy and drama are so interfused with daily life here, that a writer of comedies has only to transport the groups he sees before him to the theatre, or the spectator at the theatre can find again in his next evening's stroll, the types similar to those which convulsed him with laughter or touched him to tears the evening before. The very countenances are unaltered, both in their beauty and in their grotesqueness. Those noble gentlemen who look down upon us from the pictures of Tintoretto and Titian and Bassano have bequeathed their lordly features to their descendants, and the grotesque beings described by Goldoni exist still in his native city. Physically and morally, no people are less changed. In the very hotel at which we stayed I could recognize familiar types.

The master of the hotel was one. He was a short, thick-throated man of fair complexion and good features. He would have been good-looking but for his low stature. He moved with a kind of aggressive strut which I have often noticed in very short men; and gesticulated, talked, and dressed with a good deal of foppish pretension. Gaudy waistcoats and bright chains gave undue preponderance to his swelling chest, and the tight way in which he fastened his cravat made his speech stertorous and his face apoplectic. He had an ambition to be a linguist, and would gasp out feeble sentences in maimed French and choking English, and roll his eyes after the effort as if he would fall down in a fit. He might have taken his place in any one of Goldoni's plays as the typical Venetian innkeeper. His daughter was a tall, fair, stout girl, very young, but so developed in person that she looked much older than she was. She was well educated, according to Italian ideas, and very pretty and gentle-looking. She spoke French with the "grasseyant" Venetian accent, and had a soft, pleading, lady-like manner which would have gained her admittance into any society; but beneath all the languor of her step and voice I detected the true Venetian thirst for pleasure, for change, for excitement. "Oh ! mon Dieu !" she said to me one day, "comme c'est ennuyant de voir toujours cette eau." I could not help smiling at the eternal tautology of human nature. Was there not a certain Marquis of Queensberry who was equally bored by the constant flow of the Thames ?

I asked her one day if she had ever left Venice. She answered, with a spark of fire in her brown eyes, "J'ai été une fois à Milan," as if Milan,

with its noisy streets and glaring shops, was a paradise after Venice! I am afraid that in the simplest and most innocent woman there is always a very subtle germ of Bohemianism.

By-the-by, Bianca Capello must have looked in her youth like this brown-eyed, auburn-haired girl. If so it is easy to understand how so fair and plump a creature must have ravished the Duke of Tuscany. There seems certainly a resemblance, too, in the idiosyncrasy. A little tired of the Canal Grande, on which our pretty casements look, a little of that love of adventure and excitement which from the days of Desdemona and Bianca to those of Lady Glencora give such a piquancy to a charming woman—a sympathetic, impressionable, impulsive nature—*et voilà* we leave our homes and follow the Moor to Cyprus, or our plebeian lover to Florence. But the mother of this girl was no Emilia. She was a plain, plaintive-looking woman, thin and fallow and hollow-eyed. At a glance one could see her life had been a failure. She had been a puppet in the hands of her husband. No independence of action, or necessity for occupation had braced her character or exercised her faculties. Bigotry and excesses in bonbons had prematurely aged her. Sometimes, however, in crossing the court of the hotel, I used to hear her playing on the piano with great taste and some power, and thus I guessed how much sensibility and force had been immured between the walls of this house and the slow, calm waters which bounded it.

The gardener of the hotel (for the hotel boasted of a tiny garden) looked as if he had walked out of one of the pictures of Bassano in the ducal palace. He had curly dark hair, a square forehead, and a full red lip, but a great refinement and delicacy of form and figure. His manner was lethargic and reserved; and there was something patrician in the dignity with which he answered, monosyllabically, the troublesome and mostly unintelligible questions of burly foreigners. As to working in the garden, I never saw him do anything but smoke there, if that may be considered one of the duties of a gardener; but he came at sunrise and lounged about all day in picturesque attitudes, with a black velvet skull-cap on his head, and at sunset he entered his gondola, which remained till then moored to the boat-house, and, bending his graceful figure, rowed himself home. He certainly served his purpose as a decoration, but for a work-a-day world Florio seemed to me somewhat of an anachronism. He was very poor, he told me, but quite contented. "To make the groat a pound" never enters the ideas of Venetians now. "Let us make the groat last" is the pith of their political economy.

Of course I heard many lamentations on the present state of things—not so much any overt acts of tyranny on the part of the Austrians, but on the utter stagnation of all trade, the decay of the Carnival, and the increasing poverty. I firmly believe the Austrian occupation will cease. All wrong and evil cease in this world after a time or times; but I do not think, comparing the last years of the republic with what is passing now, that the preference would be given to Venice as it was then; and yet all

the traditions of the people, and their pride, are connected with the time when Venice was a republic. "Give us back our republic" is their cry. But the republic of Venice did its great work *for* the people, and *in* *their* *name*, but not *by* them. The nobles bearded the Doge and indulged the populace, but they alone governed. In these days it is the capacity for self-government which gives the measure of a nation's manhood. Are the Venetians ripe for this, or do they still need the dictatorship of the one, or the rule of the few, to hold and to sway the many? The only hope for Venice in the future is this, that she dares not separate herself from the rest of Italy. The old effete republic died and was buried, and all things must now be made new. There is resurrection from death always, but never under the same form. But it is not of politics and the future that I can now think, as I look from my window on the view before me—a view which every day baptizes into fresh beauty.

Opposite is the church of Our Lady of Salvation, with its flight of broad marble steps to the water. Beyond is the low, long stone building of the Custom-House, crowned by the bronze figure of Fortune on its golden ball. Lower still, and standing almost athwart the end of the canal, is St. George, with its well-grouped buildings and its tall campanile flinging its red reflection like a flame in the water. The sunset catches the vermilion-striped sail of that boat as it glides away into the yellow light, and the rude figure of the saint painted on it stands out in bold relief. As the evening deepens, and the glowing colours fade from the softest blue to yet softer neutral tint, and then into deepest purple, fitfully and at first afar off, and then gradually nearer and nearer, gondolas, with bands of singers or instruments, float hither and thither, and enrich the night with music. If the days in Venice are silent, the nights are vocal, and Venezia! Venezia! is the burden of all their songs.

The Platonic Doctrine of Ideas.

ONE of the most interesting questions connected with the study of Plato, is the relation of the Platonic to the real Socrates. There is, indeed, no reason to doubt that Plato, with much independent speculation of his own, has retained a very accurate picture of the life and habits of his great master. The *manner* of Socrates—his argumentative dexterity, his playfulness, his professed inability to make long speeches, and decided preference for investigations conducted by skilful questioning, his *practical* good sense, the plainness and familiarity of his illustrations, by which he shocked the rhetoricians of his day, and the *purpose* of Socrates—the high moral aim which pervaded all he said, and his unceasing efforts to convince his fellow-citizens of the paramount importance of truth and virtue, and the superiority of the soul to the body, while they are set forth in the pages of Plato with the most wonderful dramatic power, and with unrivalled beauty of language, have too much verisimilitude and too real a root in history to be regarded merely as the work of that glorious imagination. The teaching and method of Socrates, as represented by Plato, are quite consistent with the known facts of his life, with the hatred excited against him in the minds of the Sophists, and his subsequent condemnation by the Athenian people; and the impression produced by Xenophon is not of such a different kind as to prevent us accepting the pictures of Plato, at all events in their more prominent features. On the other hand, it might be too much to assert that any one of the Platonic dialogues is more than a very distant approach to a literal reproduction of any actual scene, while the greater number are, of course, purely imaginary, and, retaining only the manner of the master, convey the doctrines and speculations of the disciple. It would certainly have been strange if the skilled opponents of Socrates had so readily allowed themselves to be induced to give categorical answers to questions whose tendency was so plain, without the addition of some qualifying or explanatory remarks. Plato, indeed, describes their resistance to the cross-examining process with admirable skill, but real interlocutors, though they might be persuaded to desist from making orations, would never consent to answer with simple "yes" and "no." In this respect much allowance must be made for the dialogic form. It need not be doubted that Socrates often gained decided victories over his opponents, and convicted them of not knowing that which they professed to know, nor that he sometimes sent them away angry and ashamed; but it would not have been human nature for them to have contributed to their own humiliation to such an extent as they often do in the pages of Plato. Again, there are some dialogues in which there is

no question that the real Socrates is left altogether out of sight. The speculations of the *Timæus* and the *Republic* belong to Plato and not to his master, and though the dramatic situation of the *Banquet* is exquisitely truthful, its doctrines as well as those of the *Phædrus* contain little of the genuine Socratic flavour.

It is a remarkable fact that many of the Platonic dialogues apparently come to no conclusion whatever. A question is started—What is Piety? what is Temperance? what is Fortitude? Everybody has a definition ready except Socrates, who, professing to be unable himself to give any answer, takes to pieces the definitions submitted to him for consideration, convinces the proposers that they will not hold, and finally takes his departure, leaving the matter entirely undecided. In his defence before the Athenian people, as reported by Plato—and the report has all the appearance of being substantially correct—Socrates, referring to the oracle which had declared him the wisest man in Greece, explained that he had been for some time unable to understand its meaning, but discovered at length that he was wiser than others inasmuch as he was aware of his own ignorance, while they, though equally ignorant, deemed themselves wise; and further stated that he believed himself to have a divine mission to go about convincing men of their ignorance, and persuading them to follow virtue rather than wealth and honour. These are the facts upon which Mr. Grote, in his recent work,* founds his conclusion that the aim of Socrates was purely negative and intellectual. Abstract ideas, he says, had not before been made the subject of thought, nor had pains been taken to define them accurately. The orators, the Sophists, the young men who would hereafter have the control of the State, talked loudly and freely about justice, honour, prudence, and such words were continually heard in the street, and on the exchange. No one, however, when brought to the test, could give a satisfactory explanation of any of these terms. There were many who professed to know what justice was, or what honour was, and it was the special business of the Sophists to give such instruction as would enable their pupils to argue upon questions of this kind; but all broke down before the cross-examining power of Socrates, and stood convicted of shameful ignorance, not knowing the very things with which they professed to have a special acquaintance. The result, therefore, was a painful shock, from which proceeded no knowledge indeed, but the impulse to further investigation. Mr. Grote admits that there may be different opinions about the usefulness of this procedure, but thinks there cannot be any reasonable doubt that it was really that of Socrates. Yet it would surely be very strange if one who stands before the world in the character of a martyr to truth, had spent his whole life in annoying his fellow-citizens by his ingenious questionings, with the sole view of convincing them that their fancied knowledge was worthless, and that they were unable to give faultless definitions of the abstract terms they were

* *Plato and the other Companions of Socrates.*

in the habit of using. That this was a *part* of the work of the great Athenian sage, that this was the *form* which his teaching frequently assumed, that this work even in its purely negative aspect was eminently useful, as tending to incite thought, and stimulate inquiry, may all be legitimately conceded ; but it appears to us, notwithstanding, that Mr. Grote's view is very inadequate. Not only does Xenophon fail to justify that view, but the very dialogues of Plato, which are chiefly relied upon as being of a purely negative character, are not so entirely negative as Mr. Grote represents them. It was the aim of Plato in these dialogues, as we shall presently see, and it was the aim of Socrates, so far as his conversations are fairly represented there, to prove that the several virtues were not what the Athenian people thought them ; to separate them from all partial interests, and as it were to disentangle the universal and the absolute from the particular and the relative. Socrates probably had no system of philosophy ; but it was undoubtedly his conviction that the just and the honourable were absolute realities, not dependent upon the opinions which prevailed in Greece, or in Persia, at Athens, or at Sparta, but the same everywhere, and for all men ; and it was the task of his life to lead his countrymen, in what way best he could, to see this truth. He wanted the language, perhaps, to give his doctrine the precision it afterwards acquired, but if it be supposed that this was what he aimed at, though perhaps in a somewhat dim and groping way, it will be understood how Plato, following the track upon which he had been set, subsequently developed the hints received from his master, and worked out the spirit of his teaching into a complete system of philosophy.

The doctrine of ideas, with all its splendid allegorical and poetical accompaniments, is peculiarly associated with the genius of Plato. But there is no reason why the germs of it, at least, may not belong to Socrates. Plato, was clearly inspired by the intensest admiration of his master, and must have felt that he owed almost everything to his influence ; otherwise, he would neither have written of him with such enthusiasm, nor made him the mouthpiece of his own philosophy. And if Socrates, upon the day on which he died, held a conversation resembling that described in the *Phædo*—and it can hardly be entirely fictitious—there is sufficient ground for believing that he gave his disciples a history of his own mind, and explained to them how he advanced, step by step, towards the doctrine of ideas, while he cheered them with the assurance that, after his decease, his soul would return to that ideal world whence it had come down. On the other hand, it might, no doubt, be plausibly urged that this mental history is more likely to be that of Plato himself. In the *Phædo* there are many traits which are probably genuinely historical, and which certainly no one would abandon so long as it was at all possible to retain them. Such, for example, are the celebrated last words—"We owe a cock to *Asclepius*"—and still more the answer of Socrates, when Crito asked him how he would wish to be buried—"Just as you please, if you can catch me, and I do not escape from you. I cannot persuade

Crito, my friend, that I am the Socrates who now converses with you; but he thinks I am he whom he will presently see lying dead, and therefore he asks how he shall bury me." But it is quite possible that the main body of the dialogue may have no other foundation than the fact that Socrates conversed with his disciples upon the immortality of the soul, and expressed his own belief in the truth of the doctrine. The debt which Plato owed to his master may have been simply the stimulus to thought which he imparted to all who conversed with him, and his own devotion to the person of Socrates may be thought a sufficient warrant for the use he made of him in his writings. Undoubtedly, when we have to deal with an imagination such as Plato's, it is extremely difficult to say when we are treading upon the solid ground and when we are courting with him, upon the winged horses of his own *Phædrus*, through the boundless realms of thought. It is unnecessary to strike the balance between such conflicting views as those which he has just indicated, or to determine precisely what share Socrates may claim in the origination of the doctrine of ideas. Let our attention now be given to the doctrine itself.

According to this doctrine, then, there is mingled with the material world in which we live a world of forms and ideas, not perceived by sense, and apprehensible through the intellect alone. Those ideas are eternal, self-existent, and uncreate, and they alone are real beings. Visible things have a quasi-existence through participation in these real essences, and are what they are—beautiful or large or round—for no other reason than that they have in them the abstract ideas of beauty or size or rotundity. There dwell justice itself, truth itself, and all other universal ideas which are reflected in the world of sense; and not only such sublime entities as these, but also the typical forms of all common things—the original man, tree, table, by partaking of whose essence all particular men, trees, and tables are what they are. Of this real world, the mind of man would have no knowledge had it not conversed with it in a former existence; and only a few are able so far to overcome the influence of the senses as to perceive it clearly. The mind, however, is immortal, not only as being incapable of destruction, but as having already enjoyed a purer and happier existence than the present, and of that blessed state some traces still remain. In the well-known language of Wordsworth, who has simply translated into poetry this Platonic doctrine:—

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home.

Here, bound up in walls of flesh, and impeded by passion and appetite, we dwell but in a world of shadows, and see nothing as it

really is. But in that former state we were surrounded by realities, and beheld justice and truth and beauty, and all other forms as they are in themselves, apart from all accident and change, and from the conditions of time and place. In this world, therefore, we are in a state lower than that which is by nature ours. Those who are guided by philosophy, aspire ever towards that more perfect knowledge which they once possessed, and search among the shadows for those realities with which they formerly held converse; and after death, if they have been faithful here in their efforts to overcome passion and desire, they will be completely freed from their bondage and permitted to re-enter the happy state from which they descended.

In the *Phædo*, as has been already mentioned, Socrates (or Plato) gives an interesting account of the process by which he was led to adopt this doctrine. When a young man, he says, he was a keen investigator into the causes of things, and was most anxious to discover what it was that produced the various phenomena of mind. At first he gave his attention to physical causes only, but soon becoming dissatisfied with them, and meeting at the same time with the works of Anaxagoras, he welcomed with delight the doctrine of that philosopher, who taught that intelligence is the cause of all things. Here he hoped he had found the solution of his difficulties, but he was speedily undeceived. A further acquaintance with the works of Anaxagoras proved to him that intelligence was merely put forward as a general cause, but not made use of as the explanation of particular phenomena, all of which were accounted for by physical antecedents, and by anything rather than the wise ordering of a superior intelligence directing all things to the best. At length, however, Socrates adopted a solution of his own, which he found satisfactory. He assumed the existence of ideas as absolute and eternal entities, and whenever he was called upon to account for anything possessing a certain abstract quality, he explained it by assuming that it possessed the idea itself, and that there could be no other cause whatever. He would never admit, therefore, that a thing was beautiful owing to the arrangement of its parts, its colour, its adaptation to any particular purpose, but only on account of its possessing somewhat of the true and essential beauty. Previously he had been puzzled how one man could be said to be greater than another by the head (which was itself a small thing), while the other was said to be less than the first by the very same thing. Now he knew that such expressions were absurd, and that a man could be great only by greatness, and little only by littleness. The ideas thus were the sole causes of all things, and were themselves independent entities.

Such is a general sketch of the doctrine of ideas, which, however, Plato has illustrated in various ways, and with all the wealth of his splendid genius. In one passage he compares the state of man with that of dwellers in a cave, whose backs are towards the light, and who, being so fettered that they cannot turn their heads, see nothing save the shadows of

things moving before them upon the opposite wall. In another place he describes the earth as being far larger and more beautiful than is generally supposed, the surface being indeed above the visible heavens, while we who think we occupy the upper parts, really dwell in a mere cavity, and are very much in the position of men living at the bottom of the sea, or like frogs round a marsh. Here there is a dull and heavy atmosphere, in which we ignorantly suppose the heavenly bodies move and which we call heaven ; but could we ascend above it we should find that the true heaven was still far distant, and should feel as it might be fancied the fish would, were they to come up from the bottom of the sea and dwell upon our earth. With us, too, everything bears the marks of corruption. But above there is a purer and larger air ; the earth is of wondrous beauty and of colours far surpassing anything our eyes have ever looked upon, and its mountains are composed of precious stones which are not, as among us, subject to corrosion or waste. Then, there are animals and men much superior to those here, and longer lived and free from disease, and who have intercourse with the gods, and see things as they really are. And in that happy world they shall hereafter dwell who have been sufficiently purified by philosophy, "and shall arrive at abodes yet more fair than those, which it is not easy to describe." Again, the soul in its disembodied state is compared to a charioteer driving a pair of winged steeds. And this comparison is applicable to the gods themselves, whose horses, however, are perfectly obedient to the rein and are therefore driven with ease ; but in the case of all other souls, the horses—by which no doubt must be understood the natural impulses towards virtue and vice—differ in quality, the one being beautiful and noble, the other restive and not easy to be controlled. When, therefore, the gods ascend, as they often do, to the region above the heaven, and career round through the world of realities, those spirits which have succeeded in taming that restive and unmanageable steed have no difficulty in following, but among the rest there ensues great confusion and struggling, and a wild chase to get above the surface of heaven, and in the tumult many fail and are carried round without ever gaining a glimpse of that blessed world above ; and some of the horses moreover break their wings, and in consequence drop down to the earth. Those, then, who have been happy enough to gain the upper world and feast themselves upon the true essences of things, continue secure against change, but they, upon the other hand, who have fallen to the earth, are doomed to enter a human life, and receive different lots according to the number of times they have enjoyed the Divine vision. The noblest life—that of a philosopher—is reserved for those that have seen most of the world of reality, while the others enter variously the forms of kings, statesmen, poets, down to the sophist and the tyrant. Their after-fate is regulated according to the way in which they pass their lives ; but not for ten thousand years does the soul return to its former abode, nor recover its wings, but during that period goes through various lives and suffers various punishments. Only

in the case of the philosopher is there any exception to this rule. His soul, if he has three times preferred that life, is permitted to return to the upper world after three thousand years, and the wings, which even in this life began to shoot, once more attain their full vigour. For the distinction of the philosopher is that he dwells, to the best of his memory, upon those realities which he once beheld. Other souls may be so weighed down by the body, and so misled by appetite, as to mistake shadows for realities, but philosophy already partly frees the soul from its prison-house, and enables it to look behind the sensible world to those self-existent realities which are mingled with its changing appearances.

Whither, now, tend all these sublime speculations? They tend to this: that truth, beauty, and all other abstract ideas are ultimate realities, self-existent, independent, and unconditional. The poetical descriptions of the upper world, of the experiences of the disembodied spirit, of the struggles of the soul in its pre-existent state to

Soar above th' empyrial sphere

To the first good, first perfect, and first fair,

are introduced by Plato as fables, or at least as of very doubtful authenticity. He evidently intends that the poetic and imaginative elements in them shall be recognized, while, at the same time, they are to be regarded as the vehicles through which the deepest truths of his philosophy are conveyed. The doctrine of the soul's pre-existence was no doubt perfectly serious, and so probably was the doctrine that all knowledge worthy of the name, all acquaintance with things in themselves, is but the remembrance of that former happy state. And that sensible things are but shadows, and abstract ideas the only realities, is the central truth of the entire system; but all the rest is merely the clothing which Plato has furnished from his own abounding imagination. Now, if abstract ideas are ultimate facts, they will, of course, refuse to resolve themselves into anything else, and to define them in words must be extremely difficult or impossible. The mind must be brought into direct contact with them in order to apprehend them; and it is only by relying upon its own inborn power, and refusing the guidance of the senses, that it can attain this end.

* We have already ventured to express an opinion that those dialogues of Plato which seem to be entirely negative, and to conduct to no conclusion, are in reality positive in their aim, and lead to *that* conclusion which is the very centre of the Platonic system, viz. that ideas are the sole and ultimate realities. They seem to us designed to prepare the way for the doctrine which the later dialogues subsequently developed; and, on the other hand, the definitions which Plato himself gives of abstract terms—as that of Justice in the *Republic*—and which Mr. Grote truly says would never have held their ground against the battery of the Socratic dialectic—are hardly consistent with his own theory. The dialogues of search, according to this view, are simply attempts to separate the abstract idea from all connection with individual things, and set it forth as a self-existent entity. Both Socrates and those who converse with him have

some notion of what they are looking for, otherwise they could not look ; but *they* fail to perceive the difference between the idea itself and its partial embodiments ; while *he* knows that the bright object of his quest is distinct from all sensible and particular things. And now let us take just one example of the negative dialogues, and consider whether it will bear this interpretation. Take the *Hippias Major*, than which there is no better illustration of our meaning. The question here is about the beautiful, or, if we would retain the comprehensive meaning of the Greek word, the fair, and the discussion is carried on with Hippias, a Sophist, who is introduced as expressing the utmost confidence that he can answer all the difficulties of Socrates. In the course of the conversation, Hippias offers three several definitions of the beautiful, all of which he is compelled to abandon by the questions of his opponent. These definitions are so remote from the point that they have been regarded as utterly unworthy of a man who was reputed wise in his own age, and as, therefore, very far from truth and probability. Of course it is impossible to say whether they are such definitions as the real Hippias would have given, but their fault is only this, that they confound the idea with the object in which it resides, or, as it may be expressed, the common attribute with the particular thing to which it belongs, and such a mistake was not ridiculous when Plato wrote. In fact, Socrates has the utmost difficulty in making Hippias understand the nature of the question. Having brought him to admit that there is such a thing as justice distinct from the just man, he tries to convince him that, in the same way, there must be a beauty distinct from the things that are beautiful. No sooner, however, is the question put—What is the beautiful?—than Hippias forgets the lesson, and gives as his definition, “a beautiful maiden.” Socrates speedily convinces him that a maiden cannot be possessed of absolute beauty, because, though much more beautiful than an ape, she is not beautiful as compared with the gods, and explains that what he is looking for is that by the possession of which other things, as well as the beautiful maiden herself, are beautiful. Hippias, however, is still so far from the apprehension of a universal idea that he now replies that gold is the thing by which all things else are made beautiful. Socrates, in reply, shows that there are other things besides gold which impart beauty, and that gold itself is not always beautiful—namely, when it is not becoming : for example, a ladle of fig-tree wood is more becoming and therefore more beautiful than one of gold. Driven from this position, the Sophist at length appears for a moment to have a glimmering of the real object of search, and asks, is it not something which will appear beautiful at all times and in all places ? His next answer, however, shows that he is still in the dark. “It is,” he says, “always and everywhere the most beautiful thing for a man after a happy life, and having laid his parents in the grave, to be himself splendidly buried by his children.” But this does not apply to gods and heroes, and is, therefore, as futile as the rest. Socrates, accordingly, now takes his turn, and proposes several definitions of the beautiful—it is the

becoming, the useful, the pleasurable, which are, one after the other, eagerly welcomed by Hippias, and then, after examination, rejected both by him and by Socrates, and the dialogue ends with a speech from the latter, pointing out the folly of attempting to judge what is beautiful and what is not, so long as one does not know what is beauty itself.

Here the purpose of Plato seems to be quite unmistakable. There can hardly be a doubt that the result aimed at is the conviction that beauty is a thing by itself, altogether distinct from the objects in which it resides, and that there is no other quality into which it can be resolved. And the same purpose, applied to other general ideas, run through other dialogues. It is unnecessary to illustrate the subject at greater length, but any one who will read the most negative and the most apparently unsatisfactory of Plato's dialogues, will hardly fail to perceive that they all tend to the same conclusion—to the separation, namely, of the general idea, whatever it may be—temperance, or holiness, or law—from the particular persons or things which partake of its essence.

Enough has been said now to render Plato's doctrine of ideas intelligible to our non-Platonic readers, and it is only for such we write. Whether the doctrine is entirely absurd, or contains some grain of truth, is a question which the reader will probably be able to answer for himself, and to which we need not devote much space. In some respects the doctrine that abstract ideas are real entities, is highly absurd. There can be no doubt that the words animal, tree, man, &c. are simply names carried about in the memory, to be applied to all those several objects which resemble one another in such particulars as are included in the definition, and it is difficult to understand how any one could ever have maintained the contrary. There can be no doubt that justice is also a word applicable to certain understood relations and actions of intelligent beings, and that there is no such entity as justice, apart from intelligent beings and their doings. In this respect Plato was certainly misled by words. But in one respect his doctrine was not absurd. What he intended to teach was, that justice and truth, and other such abstractions, are not mere matters of human opinion, dependent upon the customs of different countries, and changing with the revolutions of time; but that there is an absolute standard somewhere, known indeed only to the wise, but by them capable of being so applied as to enable them to form a judgment in all particular cases. And every one feels that this is so. Every one feels that though all men were to act unjustly, this would not destroy justice itself, or make injustice right; that though all men were agreed in a lie, this would not alter the nature of truth. And this, doubtless, is the grain of truth which lies, almost drowned in splendour, beneath the gorgeous imagery of the *Phædrus* and the gentle beauty of the *Phædo*, and which is the purpose indirectly aimed at even in the apparently negative discussions.



Imadale.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER V.

PEDGIFT'S REMEDY.



FTER waiting to hold a preliminary consultation with his son, Mr. Pedgift the elder set forth alone for his interview with Allan at the great house.

Allowing for the difference in their ages, the son was, in this instance, so accurately the reflection of the father, that an acquaintance with either of the two Pedgifts was almost equivalent to an acquaintance with both. Add some little height and size to the figure of Pedgift Junior; give some additional breadth and boldness to his humour, and some additional solidity and composure to his confidence in himself—and the presence and character of Pedgift Senior stood for all general purposes revealed before you.

The lawyer's conveyance to Thorpe-Ambrose was his own smart gig, drawn by his famous fast-trotting mare. It was his habit to drive himself; and it was one among the trifling external peculiarities in which he and his son differed a little, to affect something of a sporting character in his dress. The drab trousers of Pedgift the elder fitted close to his legs; his boots in dry weather and wet alike, were equally thick in the sole; his coat pockets overlapped his hips, and his favourite summer cravat was of light spotted muslin, tied in the neatest and smallest of bows. He used tobacco like his son, but in a different form. While the younger man smoked, the elder took snuff assiduously; and it was noticed among his intimates that he always held his "pinch" in a state of suspense between his box and

his nose, when he was going to clinch a good bargain, or to say a good thing. The art of diplomacy enters largely into the practice of all successful men in the lower branch of the law. Mr. Pedgift's form of diplomatic practice had been the same throughout his life, on every occasion when he found his arts of persuasion required at an interview with another man. He invariably kept his strongest argument, or his boldest proposal, to the last, and invariably remembered it at the door (after previously taking his leave), as if it was a purely accidental consideration which had that instant occurred to him. Jocular friends, acquainted by previous experience with this form of proceeding, had given it the name of "Pedgift's postscript." There were few people in Thorpe-Ambrose who did not know what it meant, when the lawyer suddenly checked his exit at the opened door; came back softly to his chair, with his pinch of snuff suspended between his box and his nose; said, "By-the-by, there's a point occurs to me;" and settled the question off-hand, after having given it up in despair not a minute before.

This was the man whom the march of events at Thorpe-Ambrose had now thrust capriciously into a foremost place. This was the one friend at hand to whom Allan in his social isolation could turn for counsel in the hour of need.

"Good evening, Mr. Armadale. Many thanks for your prompt attention to my very disagreeable letter," said Pedgift Senior, opening the conversation cheerfully the moment he entered his client's house. "I hope you understand, sir, that I had really no choice under the circumstances, but to write as I did?"

"I have very few friends, Mr. Pedgift," returned Allan simply. "And I am sure you are one of the few."

"Much obliged, Mr. Armadale. I have always tried to deserve your good opinion, and I mean, if I can, to deserve it now. You found yourself comfortable I hope, sir, at the hotel in London? We call it Our hotel. Some rare old wine in the cellar, which I should have introduced to your notice if I had had the honour of being with you. My son unfortunately knows nothing about wine."

Allan felt his false position in the neighbourhood far too acutely to be capable of talking of anything but the main business of the evening. His lawyer's politely roundabout method of approaching the painful subject to be discussed between them, rather irritated than composed him. He came at once to the point, in his own bluntly straightforward way.

"The hotel was very comfortable, Mr. Pedgift, and your son was very kind to me. But we are not in London now; and I want to talk to you about how I am to meet the lies that are being told of me in this place. Only point me out any one man," cried Allan with a rising voice and a mounting colour,—"any one man who says I am afraid to show my face in the neighbourhood; and I'll horsewhip him publicly before another day is over his head!"

Pedgift Senior helped himself to a pinch of snuff, and held it calmly in suspense midway between his box and his nose.

"You can horsewhip a man, sir; but you can't horsewhip a neighbourhood," said the lawyer in his politely epigrammatic manner. "We will fight our battle, if you please, without borrowing our weapons of the coachman yet awhile, at any rate."

"But how are we to begin?" asked Allan impatiently. "How am I to contradict the infamous things they say of me?"

"There are two ways of stepping out of your present awkward position, sir—a short way, and a long way," replied Pedgift Senior. "The short way (which is always the best) has occurred to me since I have heard of your proceedings in London from my son. I understand that you permitted him, after you received my letter, to take me into your confidence. I have drawn various conclusions from what he has told me, which I may find it necessary to trouble you with presently. In the meantime I should be glad to know under what circumstances you went to London to make these unfortunate inquiries about Miss Gwilt? Was it your own notion to pay that visit to Mrs. Mandeville? or were you acting under the influence of some other person?"

Allan hesitated. "I can't honestly tell you it was my own notion," he replied—and said no more.

"I thought as much!" remarked Pedgift Senior in high triumph. "The short way out of our present difficulty, Mr. Armadale, lies straight through that other person, under whose influence you acted. That other person must be presented forthwith to public notice, and must stand in that other person's proper place. The name if you please, sir, to begin with—we'll come to the circumstances directly."

"I am sorry to say, Mr. Pedgift, that we must try the longest way, if you have no objection," replied Allan quietly. "The short way happens to be a way I can't take on this occasion."

The men who rise in the law are the men who decline to take No for an answer. Mr. Pedgift the elder had risen in the law; and Mr. Pedgift the elder now declined to take No for an answer. But all pertinacity—even professional pertinacity included—sooner or later finds its limits; and the lawyer, doubly fortified as he was by long experience and copious pinches of snuff, found his limits at the very outset of the interview. It was impossible that Allan could respect the confidence which Mrs. Milroy had treacherously affected to place in him. But he had an honest man's regard for his own pledged word—the regard which looks straightforward at the fact, and which never glances sidelong at the circumstances—and the utmost persistency of Pedgift Senior failed to move him a hair's-breadth from the position which he had taken up. "No" is the strongest word in the English language, in the mouth of any man who has the courage to repeat it often enough—and Allan had the courage to repeat it often enough on this occasion.

"Very good, sir," said the lawyer, accepting his defeat without the

slightest loss of temper. "The choice rests with you, and you have chosen. We will go the long way. It starts (allow me to inform you) from my office; and it leads (as I strongly suspect) through a very miry road to—Miss Gwilt."

Allan looked at his legal adviser in speechless astonishment.

"If you won't expose the person who is responsible, in the first instance, sir, for the inquiries to which you unfortunately lent yourself," proceeded Mr. Pedgift the elder, "the only other alternative, in your present position, is to justify the inquiries themselves."

"And how is that to be done?" inquired Allan.

"By proving to the whole neighbourhood, Mr. Armadale, what I firmly believe to be the truth—that the pet object of the public protection is an adventuress of the worst class; an undeniably worthless and dangerous woman. In plainer English still, sir, by employing time enough and money enough to discover the truth about Miss Gwilt."

Before Allan could say a word in answer, there was an interruption at the door. After the usual preliminary knock, one of the servants came in.

"I told you I was not to be interrupted," said Allan irritably. "Good heavens! am I never to have done with them? another letter!"

"Yes, sir," said the man, holding it out. "And," he added, speaking words of evil omen in his master's ears, "the person waits for an answer."

Allan looked at the address of the letter with a natural expectation of encountering the handwriting of the major's wife. The anticipation was not realized. His correspondent was plainly a lady, but the lady was not Mrs. Milroy.

"Who can it be?" he said, looking mechanically at Pedgift Senior as he opened the envelope.

Pedgift Senior gently tapped his snuff-box, and said without a moment's hesitation—"Miss Gwilt."

Allan opened the letter. The first two words in it were the echo of the two words the lawyer had just pronounced. It *was* Miss Gwilt!

Once more, Allan looked at his legal adviser in speechless astonishment.

"I have known a good many of them in my time, sir," explained Pedgift Senior, with a modesty equally rare and becoming in a man of his age. "Not as handsome as Miss Gwilt, I admit. But quite as bad, I dare say. Read your letter, Mr. Armadale—read your letter."

Allan read these lines:—

"Miss Gwilt presents her compliments to Mr. Armadale, and begs to know if it will be convenient to him to favour her with an interview, either this evening or to-morrow morning. Miss Gwilt offers no apology for making her present request. She believes Mr. Armadale will grant it as an act of justice towards a friendless woman whom he has been innocently the means of injuring, and who is earnestly desirous to set herself right in his estimation."

Allan handed the letter to his lawyer in silent perplexity and distress.

The face of Mr. Pedgift the elder expressed but one feeling when he had read the letter in his turn and had handed it back—a feeling of profound admiration. “What a lawyer she would have made,” he exclaimed, fervently, “if she had only been a man!”

“I can’t treat this as lightly as you do, Mr. Pedgift,” said Allan. “It’s dreadfully distressing to me. I was so fond of her,” he added, in a lower tone,—“I was so fond of her once.”

Mr. Pedgift Senior suddenly became serious on his side.

“Do you mean to say, sir, that you actually contemplate seeing Miss Gwilt?” he asked, with an expression of genuine dismay.

“I can’t treat her cruelly,” returned Allan. “I have been the means of injuring her—without intending it, God knows!—I can’t treat her cruelly after that!”

“Mr. Armadale,” said the lawyer, “you did me the honour, a little while since, to say that you considered me your friend. May I presume on that position to ask you a question or two, before you go straight to your own ruin?”

“Any questions you like,” said Allan, looking back at the letter—the only letter he had ever received from Miss Gwilt.

“You have had one trap set for you already, sir, and you have fallen into it. Do you want to fall into another?”

“You know the answer to that question, Mr. Pedgift, as well as I do.”

“I’ll try again, Mr. Armadale; we lawyers are not easily discouraged. Do you think that any statement Miss Gwilt might make to you, if you do see her, would be a statement to be relied on, after what you and my son discovered in London?”

“She might explain what we discovered in London,” suggested Allan, still looking at the writing, and thinking of the hand that had traced it.

“*Might* explain it? My dear sir, she is quite certain to explain it! I will do her justice: I believe she would make out a case without a single flaw in it from beginning to end.”

That last answer forced Allan’s attention away from the letter. The lawyer’s pitiless common sense showed him no mercy.

“If you see that woman again, sir,” proceeded Pedgift Senior, “you will commit the rashest act of folly I ever heard of in all my experience. She can have but one object in coming here—to practise on your weakness for her. Nobody can say into what false step she may not lead you, if you once give her the opportunity. You admit yourself that you have been fond of her—your attentions to her have been the subject of general remark—if you haven’t actually offered her the chance of becoming Mrs. Armadale, you have done the next thing to it—and knowing all this, you propose to see her and to let her work on you with her devilish beauty and her devilish cleverness, in the character of your interesting victim! You, who are one of the best matches in England! You who are the natural prey of all the hungry single women in the community

I never heard the like of it; I never, in all my professional experience, heard the like of it! If you must positively put yourself in a dangerous position, Mr. Armadale," concluded Pedgift the elder, with the everlasting pinch of snuff held in suspense between his box and his nose, "there's a wild-beast show coming to our town next week. Let in the tigress, sir, —don't let in Miss Gwilt!"

For the third time Allan looked at his lawyer. And for the third time his lawyer looked back at him quite unabashed.

"You seem to have a very bad opinion of Miss Gwilt," said Allan.

"The worst possible opinion, Mr. Armadale," retorted Pedgift Senior, coolly. "We will return to that, when we have sent the lady's messenger about his business. Will you take my advice? Will you decline to see her?"

"I would willingly decline—it would be so dreadfully distressing to both of us," said Allan. "I would willingly decline, if I only knew how."

"Bless my soul, Mr. Armadale, it's easy enough! Don't commit yourself in writing. Send out to the messenger, and say there's no answer."

The short course thus suggested, was a course which Allan positively declined to take. "It's treating her brutally," he said; "I can't and won't do it."

Once more, the pertinacity of Pedgift the elder found its limits—and once more that wise man yielded gracefully to a compromise. On receiving his client's promise not to see Miss Gwilt, he consented to Allan's committing himself in writing—under his lawyer's dictation. The letter thus produced was modelled on Allan's own style; it began and ended in one sentence. "Mr. Armadale presents his compliments to Miss Gwilt and regrets that he cannot have the pleasure of seeing her at Thorpe-Ambrose." Allan had pleaded hard for a second sentence, explaining that he only declined Miss Gwilt's request from a conviction that an interview would be needlessly distressing on both sides. But his legal adviser firmly rejected the proposed addition to the letter. "When you say No to a woman, sir," remarked Pedgift Senior, "always say it in one word. If you give her your reasons, she invariably believes that you mean Yes."

Producing that little gem of wisdom from the rich mine of his professional experience, Mr. Pedgift the elder sent out the answer to Miss Gwilt's messenger, and recommended the servant to "see the fellow, whoever he was, well clear of the house."

"Now, sir," said the lawyer, "we will come back, if you like, to my opinion of Miss Gwilt. It doesn't at all agree with yours, I'm afraid. You think her an object for pity—quite natural at your age. I think her an object for the inside of a prison—quite natural at mine. You shall hear the grounds on which I have formed my opinion directly. Let me show you that I am in earnest by putting the opinion itself, in the

first place, to a practical test. Do you think Miss Gwilt is likely to persist in paying you a visit, Mr. Armadale, after the answer you have just sent to her?"

"Quite impossible!" cried Allan, warmly. "Miss Gwilt is a lady; after the letter I have sent to her, she will never come near me again."

"There we join issue, sir," cried Pedgift Senior. "I say she will snap her fingers at your letter (which was one of the reasons why I objected to your writing it). I say, she is in all probability waiting her messenger's return, in or near your grounds at this moment. I say, she will try to force her way in here, before four-and-twenty hours more are over your head. Egad, sir!" cried Mr. Pedgift, looking at his watch, "it's only seven o'clock now. She's bold enough and clever enough to catch you unawares this very evening. Permit me to ring for the servant—permit me to request that you will give him orders immediately to say you are not at home. You needn't hesitate, Mr. Armadale! If you're right about Miss Gwilt, it's a mere formality. If I'm right, it's a wise precaution. Back your opinion, sir," said Mr. Pedgift, ringing the bell, "I back mine!"

Allan was sufficiently nettled when the bell rang, to feel ready to give the order. But when the servant came in, past remembrances got the better of him, and the words stuck in his throat. "You give the order," he said to Mr. Pedgift—and walked away abruptly to the window. "You're a good fellow!" thought the old lawyer, looking after him, and penetrating his motive on the instant. "The claws of that she-devil shan't scratch you if I can help it."

The servant waited inexorably for his orders.

"If Miss Gwilt calls here, either this evening, or at any other time," said Pedgift Senior, "Mr. Armadale is not at home. Wait! If she asks when Mr. Armadale will be back, you don't know. Wait! If she proposes coming in and sitting down, you have a general order that nobody is to come in and sit down, unless they have a previous appointment with Mr. Armadale. Come!" cried old Pedgift, rubbing his hands cheerfully when the servant had left the room, "I've stopped her out now, at any rate! The orders are all given, Mr. Armadale. We may go on with our conversation."

Allan came back from the window. "The conversation is not a very pleasant one," he said. "No offence to you, but I wish it was over."

"We will get it over as soon as possible, sir," said Pedgift Senior, still persisting as only lawyers and women can persist, in forcing his way little by little nearer and nearer to his own object. "Let us go back, if you please, to the practical suggestion which I offered to you when the servant came in with Miss Gwilt's note. There is, I repeat, only one way left for you, Mr. Armadale, out of your present awkward position. You must pursue your inquiries about this woman to an end—on the chance (which I consider next to a certainty) that the end will justify you in the estimation of the neighbourhood."

"I wish to God I had never made any inquiries at all!" said Allan. "Nothing will induce me, Mr. Pedgift, to make any more."

"Why?" asked the lawyer.

"Can you ask me why," retorted Allan, hotly, "after your son has told you what we found out in London? Even if I had less cause to be—to be sorry for Miss Gwilt than I have; even if it was some other woman, do you think I would inquire any further into the secret of a poor betrayed creature—much less expose it to the neighbourhood? I should think myself as great a scoundrel as the man who has cast her out helpless on the world, if I did anything of the kind. I wonder you can ask me the question—upon my soul, I wonder you can ask me the question!"

"Give me your hand, Mr. Armadale!" cried Pedgift Senior, warmly; "I honour you for being so angry with me. The neighbourhood may say what it pleases; you're a gentleman, sir, in the best sense of the word. Now," pursued the lawyer, dropping Allan's hand, and lapsing back instantly from sentiment to business, "just hear what I have got to say in my own defence. Suppose Miss Gwilt's real position happens to be nothing like what you are generously determined to believe it to be?"

"We have no reason to suppose that," said Allan resolutely.

"Such is your opinion, sir," persisted Pedgift. "Mine, founded on what is publicly known of Miss Gwilt's proceedings here, and on what I have seen of Miss Gwilt herself, is that she is as far as I am from being the sentimental victim you are inclined to make her out. Gently, Mr. Armadale! remember that I have put my opinion to a practical test, and wait to condemn it off-hand until events have justified you. Let me put my points, sir,—make allowances for me as a lawyer—and let me put my points. You and my son are young men; and I don't deny that the circumstances, on the surface, appear to justify the interpretation which, as young men, you have placed on them. I am an old man—I know that circumstances are not always to be taken as they appear on the surface—and I possess the great advantage, in the present case, of having had years of professional experience among some of the wickedest women who ever walked this earth."

Allan opened his lips to protest, and checked himself, in despair of producing the slightest effect. Pedgift Senior bowed in polite acknowledgment of his client's self-restraint, and took instant advantage of it to go on.

"All Miss Gwilt's proceedings," he resumed, "since your unfortunate correspondence with the major, show me that she is an old hand at deceit. The moment she is threatened with exposure—exposure of some kind, there can be no doubt, after what you discovered in London—she turns your honourable silence to the best possible account, and leaves the major's service in the character of a martyr. Once out of the house, what does she do next? She boldly stops in the neighbourhood, and serves three excellent purposes by doing so. In the first place, she shows every-

body that she is not afraid of facing another attack on her reputation. In the second place, she is close at hand to twist you round her little finger, and to become Mrs. Armadale in spite of circumstances, if you (and I) allow her the opportunity. In the third place, if you (and I) are wise enough to distrust her, she is equally wise on her side, and doesn't give us the first great chance of following her to London, and associating her with her accomplices. Is this the conduct of an unhappy woman who has lost her character in a moment of weakness, and who has been driven unwillingly into a deception to get it back again?"

"You put it cleverly," said Allan, answering with marked reluctance; "I can't deny that you put it cleverly."

"Your own common sense, Mr. Armadale, is beginning to tell you that I put it justly," said Pedgift Senior. "I don't presume to say yet what this woman's connection may be with those people at Pimlico. All I assert is, that it is not the connection you suppose. Having stated the facts so far, I have only to add my own personal impression of Miss Gwilt. I won't shock you, if I can help it—I'll try if I can't put it cleverly again. She came to my office (as I told you in my letter), no doubt to make friends with your lawyer, if she could—she came to tell me in the most forgiving and Christian manner, that she didn't blame *you*."

"Do you ever believe in anybody, Mr. Pedgift?" interposed Allan.

"Sometimes, Mr. Armadale," returned Pedgift the elder, as unabashed as ever. "I believe as often as a lawyer can. To proceed, sir. When I was in the criminal branch of practice, it fell to my lot to take instructions for the defence of women committed for trial, from the women's own lips. Whatever other difference there might be among them, I got, in time, to notice, among those who were particularly wicked and unquestionably guilty, one point in which they all resembled each other. Tall and short, old and young, handsome and ugly, they all had a secret self-possession that nothing could shake. On the surface they were as different as possible. Some of them were in a state of indignation; some of them were drowned in tears; some of them were full of pious confidence; and some of them were resolved to commit suicide before the night was out. But only put your finger suddenly on the weak point in the story told by any one of them, and there was an end of her rage, or her tears, or her piety, or her despair—and out came the genuine woman, in full possession of all her resources, with a neat little lie that exactly suited the circumstances of the case. Miss Gwilt was in tears, sir,—becoming tears that didn't make her nose red,—and I put my finger suddenly on the weak point in her story. Down dropped her pathetic pocket-handkerchief from her beautiful blue eyes, and out came the genuine woman with the neat little lie that exactly suited the circumstances! I felt twenty years younger, Mr. Armadale, on the spot. I declare I thought I was in Newgate again, with my note-book in my hand, taking my instructions for the defence!"

"The next thing, you'll say, Mr. Pedgift," cried Allan, angrily, "is that Miss Gwilt has been in prison!"

Pedgift Senior calmly rapped his snuff-box, and had his answer ready at a moment's notice.

"She may have richly deserved to see the inside of a prison, Mr. Armadale; but, in the age we live in, that is one excellent reason for her never having been near any place of the kind. A prison, in the present tender state of public feeling, for a charming woman like Miss Gwilt! My dear sir, if she had attempted to murder you or me, and if an inhuman judge and jury had decided on sending her to a prison, the first object of modern society would be to prevent her going into it; and, if that couldn't be done, the next object would be to let her out again as soon as possible. Read your newspaper, Mr. Armadale, and you'll find we live in piping times for the black sheep of the community—if they are only black enough. I insist on asserting, sir, that we have got one of the blackest of the lot to deal with in this case. I insist on asserting that you have had the rare luck, in these unfortunate inquiries, to pitch on a woman who happens to be a fit object for inquiry, in the interests of the public protection. Differ with me as strongly as you please—but don't make up your mind finally about Miss Gwilt, until events have put those two opposite opinions of ours to the test that I have proposed. A fairer test there can't be. I agree with you, that no lady worthy of the name could attempt to force her way in here, after receiving your letter. But I deny that Miss Gwilt is worthy of the name; and I say she will try to force her way in here in spite of you."

"And I say she won't!" retorted Allan, firmly.

Pedgift Senior leaned back in his chair and smiled. There was a momentary silence—and in that silence, the door-bell rang.

The lawyer and the client both looked expectantly in the direction of the hall.

"No!" cried Allan, more angrily than ever.

"Yes!" said Pedgift Senior, contradicting him with the utmost politeness.

They waited the event. The opening of the house-door was audible, but the room was too far from it for the sound of voices to reach the ear as well. After a long interval of expectation, the closing of the door was heard at last. Allan rose impetuously, and rang the bell. Mr. Pedgift the elder sat sublimely calm, and enjoyed, with a gentle zest, the largest pinch of snuff he had taken yet.

"Anybody for me?" asked Allan, when the servant came in.

The man looked at Pedgift Senior, with an expression of unutterable reverence, and answered—"Miss Gwilt."

"I don't want to crow over you, sir," said Mr. Pedgift the elder, when the servant had withdrawn. "But what do you think of Miss Gwilt now?"

Allan shook his head in silent discouragement and distress.

"Time is of some importance, Mr. Armadale. After what has just happened, do you still object to taking the course I have had the honour of suggesting to you?"

"I can't, Mr. Pedgift," said Allan. "I can't be the means of disgracing her in the neighbourhood. I would rather be disgraced myself—as I am."

"Let me put it in another way, sir. Excuse my persisting. You have been very kind to me and my family; and I have a personal interest, as well as a professional interest in you. If you can't prevail on yourself to show this woman's character in its true light, will you take common precautions to prevent her doing any more harm? Will you consent to having her privately watched, as long as she remains in this neighbourhood?"

For the second time, Allan shook his head.

"Is that your final resolution, sir?"

"It is, Mr. Pedgift; but I am much obliged to you for your advice, all the same."

Pedgift Senior rose in a state of gentle resignation, and took up his hat. "Good evening, sir," he said, and made sorrowfully for the door. Allan rose on his side, innocently supposing that the interview was at an end. Persons better acquainted with the diplomatic habits of his legal adviser, would have recommended him to keep his seat. The time was ripe for "Pedgift's postscript," and the lawyer's indicative snuff-box was at that moment in one of his hands, as he opened the door with the other.

"Good evening," said Allan.

Pedgift Senior opened the door—stopped—considered—closed the door again—came back mysteriously with his pinch of snuff in suspense between his box and his nose—and repeating his invariable formula, "By-the-by, there's a point occurs to me," quietly resumed possession of his empty chair.

Allan, wondering, took the seat, in his turn, which he had just left. Lawyer and client looked at each other once more, and the inexhaustible interview began again.

CHAPTER VI.

PEDGIFT'S POSTSCRIPT.

"I MENTIONED that a point had occurred to me, sir," remarked Pedgift Senior.

"You did," said Allan.

"Would you like to hear what it is, Mr. Armadale?"

"If you please," said Allan.

"With all my heart, sir! This is the point. I attach considerable importance—if nothing else can be done—to having Miss Gwilt privately looked after, as long as she stops at Thorpe-Ambrose. It struck me just now at the door, Mr. Armadale, that what you are not willing to do for your own security, you might be willing to do for the security of another person."

"What other person?" inquired Allan.

"A young lady who is a near neighbour of yours, sir. Shall I mention the name, in confidence? Miss Milroy."

Allan started, and changed colour.

"Miss Milroy!" he repeated. "Can *she* be concerned in this miserable business? I hope not, Mr. Pedgift; I sincerely hope not."

"I paid a visit, in your interests, sir, at the cottage, this morning," proceeded Pedgift Senior. "You shall hear what happened there, and judge for yourself. Major Milroy has been expressing his opinion of you pretty freely; and I thought it highly desirable to give him a caution. It's always the way with those quiet addle-headed men—when they do once wake up, there's no reasoning with their obstinacy, and no quieting their violence. Well, sir, this morning I went to the cottage. The major and Miss Neelie were both in the parlour—miss not looking so pretty as usual; pale, I thought, pale, and worn, and anxious. Up jumps the addle-headed major (I wouldn't give *that*, Mr. Armadale, for the brains of a man who can occupy himself for half his lifetime in making a clock!)—up jumps the addle-headed major, in the loftiest manner, and actually tries to look me down. Ha! ha! the idea of anybody looking *me* down, at my time of life. I behaved like a Christian; I nodded kindly to old What's-o'clock. 'Fine morning, major,' says I. 'Have you any business with me?' says he. 'Just a word,' says I. Miss Neelie, like the sensible girl she is, gets up to leave the room; and what does her ridiculous father do? He stops her. 'You needn't go, my dear; I have nothing to say to Mr. Pedgift,' says this old military idiot, and turns my way, and tries to look me down again. 'You are Mr. Armadale's lawyer,' says he; 'if you come on any business relating to Mr. Armadale, I refer you to my solicitor.' (His solicitor is Darch; and Darch has had enough of *me* in business, I can tell you!) 'My errand here, major, does certainly relate to Mr. Armadale,' says I; 'but it doesn't concern your lawyer—at any rate, just yet. I wish to caution you to suspend your opinion of my client, or, if you won't do that, to be careful how you express it in public. I warn you that our turn is to come, and that you are not at the end yet of this scandal about Miss Gwilt.' It struck me as likely that he would lose his temper when he found himself tackled in that way, and he amply fulfilled my expectations. He was quite violent in his language—the poor weak creature—actually violent with *me*! I behaved like a Christian again; I nodded kindly, and wished him good morning. When I looked round to wish Miss Neelie good morning too, she was gone. You seem restless, Mr. Armadale," remarked Pedgift Senior, as Allan, feeling the sting of old recollections, suddenly started out of his chair, and began pacing up and down the room. "I won't try your patience much longer, sir; I am coming to the point."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Pedgift," said Allan, returning to his seat, and trying to look composedly at the lawyer through the intervening image of Neelie which the lawyer had called up.

"Well, sir, I left the cottage," resumed Pedgift Senior. "Just as I turned the corner from the garden into the park, who should I stumble on but Miss Neelie herself, evidently on the look-out for me. 'I want to speak to you for one moment, Mr. Pedgift!' says she. 'Does Mr. Armadale think *me* mixed up in this matter?' She was violently agitated—tears in her eyes, sir, of the sort which my legal experience has *not* accustomed me to see. I quite forgot myself; I actually gave her my arm, and led her away gently among the trees. (A nice position to find me in, if any of the scandal-mongers of the town had happened to be walking in that direction!) 'My dear Miss Milroy,' says I, 'why should Mr. Armadale think *you* mixed up in it?'"

"You ought to have told her at once that I thought nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Allan, indignantly. "Why did you leave her a moment in doubt about it?"

"Because I am a lawyer, Mr. Armadale," rejoined Pedgift Senior, drily. "Even in moments of sentiment, under convenient trees, with a pretty girl on my arm, I can't entirely divest myself of my professional caution. Don't look distressed, sir, pray! I set things right in due course of time. Before I left Miss Milroy, I told her, in the plainest terms, no such idea had ever entered your head."

"Did she seem relieved?" asked Allan.

"She was able to dispense with the use of my arm, sir," replied old Pedgift, as drily as ever, "and to pledge me to inviolable secrecy on the subject of our interview. She was particularly desirous that *you* should hear nothing about it. If you are at all anxious on your side, to know why I am now betraying her confidence, I beg to inform you that her confidence related to no less a person than the lady who favoured you with a call just now—Miss Gwilt."

Allan, who had been once more restlessly pacing the room, stopped, and returned to his chair.

"Is this serious?" he asked.

"Most serious, sir," returned Pedgift Senior. "I am betraying Miss Neelie's secret, in Miss Neelie's own interest. Let us go back to that cautious question I put to her. She found some little difficulty in answering it—for the reply involved her in a narrative of the parting interview between her governess and herself. This is the substance of it. The two were alone when Miss Gwilt took leave of her pupil; and the words she used (as reported to me by Miss Neelie) were these. She said, 'Your mother has declined to allow me to take leave of her. Do you decline too? Miss Neelie's answer was a remarkably sensible one for a girl of her age. 'We have not been good friends,' she said, 'and I believe we are equally glad to part with each other. But I have no wish to decline taking leave of you.' Saying that, she held out her hand. Miss Gwilt stood looking at her steadily, without taking it, and addressed her in these words:—'*You are not Mrs. Armadale yet.*' Gently, sir! Keep your temper. It's not at all wonderful that a woman conscious of having her

own mercenary designs on you, should attribute similar designs to a young lady who happens to be your near neighbour. Let me go on. Miss Neelie, by her own confession (and quite naturally, I think), was excessively indignant. She owns to having answered, 'You shameless creature, how dare you say that to me!' Miss Gwilt's rejoinder was rather a remarkable one—the anger, on her side, appears to have been of the cool, still, venomous kind. 'Nobody ever yet injured me, Miss Milroy,' she said, 'without sooner or later bitterly repenting it. You will bitterly repent it.' She stood looking at her pupil for a moment in dead silence, and then left the room. Miss Neelie appears to have felt the imputation fastened on her, in connection with you, far more sensitively than she felt the threat. She had previously known, as everybody had known in the house, that some unacknowledged proceedings of yours in London had led to Miss Gwilt's voluntary withdrawal from her situation. And she now inferred, from the language addressed to her, that she was actually believed by Miss Gwilt to have set those proceedings on foot, to advance herself, and to injure her governess, in your estimation. Gently, sir, gently! I haven't quite done yet. As soon as Miss Neelie had recovered herself, she went upstairs to speak to Mrs. Milroy. Miss Gwilt's abominable imputation had taken her by surprise; and she went to her mother first for enlightenment and advice. She got neither the one nor the other. Mrs. Milroy declared she was too ill to enter on the subject, and she has remained too ill to enter on it ever since. Miss Neelie applied next to her father. The major stopped her the moment your name passed her lips: he declared he would never hear you mentioned again by any member of his family. She has been left in the dark from that time to this—not knowing how she might have been misrepresented by Miss Gwilt, or what falsehoods you might have been led to believe of her. At my age and in my profession, I don't profess to have any extraordinary softness of heart. But I do think, Mr. Armadale, that Miss Neelie's position deserves our sympathy."

"I'll do anything to help her!" cried Allan, impulsively. "You don't know, Mr. Pedgift, what reason I have——" He checked himself, and confusedly repeated his first words. "I'll do anything," he reiterated earnestly—"anything in the world to help her!"

"Do you really mean that, Mr. Armadale? Excuse my asking—but you can very materially help Miss Neelie if you choose!"

"How?" asked Allan. "Only tell me how!"

"By giving me your authority, sir, to protect her from Miss Gwilt."

Having fired that shot point-blank at his client, the wise lawyer waited a little to let it take its effect before he said any more.

Allan's face clouded, and he shifted uneasily from side to side of his chair.

"Your son is hard enough to deal with, Mr. Pedgift," he said. "And you are harder than your son."

"Thank you, sir," rejoined the ready Pedgift, "in my son's name and

my own, for a handsome compliment to the firm. If you really wish to be of assistance to Miss Neelie," he went on more seriously, "I have shown you the way. You can do nothing to quiet her anxiety, which I have not done already. As soon as I had assured her that no misconception of her conduct existed in your mind, she went away satisfied. Her governess's parting threat doesn't seem to have dwelt on her memory. I can tell you, Mr. Armadale, it dwells on mine! You know my opinion of Miss Gwilt; and you know what Miss Gwilt herself has done this very evening, to justify that opinion even in your eyes. May I ask, after all that has passed, whether you think she is the sort of woman who can be trusted to confine herself to empty threats?"

The question was a formidable one to answer. Forced steadily back from the position which he had occupied at the outset of the interview, by the irresistible pressure of plain facts, Allan began for the first time to show symptoms of yielding on the subject of Miss Gwilt. "Is there no other way of protecting Miss Milroy but the way you have mentioned?" he asked uneasily.

"Do you think the major would listen to you, sir, if you spoke to him?" asked Pedgift Senior sarcastically; "I'm rather afraid he wouldn't honour *me* with his attention. Or perhaps you would prefer alarming Miss Neelie by telling her in plain words that we both think her in danger? Or, suppose you send me to Miss Gwilt, with instructions to inform her that she has done her pupil a cruel injustice? Women are so proverbially ready to listen to reason; and they are so universally disposed to alter their opinions of each other on application—especially when one woman thinks that another woman has destroyed her prospect of making a good marriage. Don't mind *me*, Mr. Armadale—I'm only a lawyer, and I can sit waterproof under another shower of Miss Gwilt's tears!"

"Damn it, Mr. Pedgift, tell me in plain words what you want to do!" cried Allan, losing his temper at last.

"In plain words, Mr. Armadale, I want to keep Miss Gwilt's proceedings privately under view, as long as she stops in this neighbourhood. I answer for finding a person who will look after her delicately and discreetly. And I agree to discontinue even this harmless superintendence of her actions, if there isn't good reason shown for continuing it, to your entire satisfaction, in a week's time. I make that moderate proposal, sir, in what I sincerely believe to be Miss Milroy's interest, and I wait your answer, Yes or No."

"Can't I have time to consider?" asked Allan, driven to the last helpless expedient of taking refuge in delay.

"Certainly, Mr. Armadale. But don't forget, while you are considering, that Miss Milroy is in the habit of walking out alone in your park, innocent of all apprehension of danger—and that Miss Gwilt is perfectly free to take any advantage of that circumstance that Miss Gwilt pleases."

"Do as you like!" exclaimed Allan in despair. "And, for God's sake, don't torment me any longer!"

Popular prejudice may deny it—but the profession of the law is a practically Christian profession in one respect at least. Of all the large collection of ready answers lying in wait for mankind on a lawyer's lips, none is kept in better working order than "the soft answer which turneth away wrath." Pedgift Senior rose with the alacrity of youth in his legs, and the wise moderation of age on his tongue. "Many thanks, sir," he said, "for the attention you have bestowed on me. I congratulate you on your decision, and I wish you good evening." This time, his indicative snuff-box was not in his hand, when he opened the door, and he actually disappeared, without coming back for a second postscript.

Allan's head sank on his breast, when he was left alone. "If it was only the end of the week!" he thought longingly. "If I only had Midwinter back again!"

As that aspiration escaped the client's lips, the lawyer got gaily into his gig. "Hie away, old girl!" cried Pedgift Senior, patting the fast-trotting mare with the end of his whip. "I never keep a lady waiting—and I've got business to-night with one of your own sex!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE MARTYRDOM OF MISS GWILT.

THE outskirts of the little town of Thorpe-Ambrose, on the side nearest to "the great house," have earned some local celebrity as exhibiting the prettiest suburb of the kind to be found in East Norfolk. Here, the villas and gardens are for the most part built and laid out in excellent taste; the trees are in the prime of their growth; and the heathy common beyond the houses, rises and falls in picturesque and delightful variety of broken ground. The rank, fashion, and beauty of the town make this place their evening promenade; and when a stranger goes out for a drive, if he leaves it to the coachman, the coachman starts by way of the common as a matter of course.

On the opposite side, that is to say, on the side farthest from "the great house," the suburbs (in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-one) were universally regarded as a sore subject by all persons zealous for the reputation of the town.

Here, Nature was uninviting; man was poor; and social progress, as exhibited under the form of building, halted miserably. The streets dwindled feebly as they receded from the centre of the town, into smaller and smaller houses, and died away on the barren open ground into an atrophy of skeleton cottages. Builders hereabouts appeared to have universally abandoned their work in the first stage of its creation. Landholders set up poles on lost patches of ground; and, plaintively advertising that they were to let for building, raised sickly little crops meanwhile, in

despair of finding a purchaser to deal with them. All the waste paper of the town seemed to float congenially to this neglected spot ; and all the fretful children came and cried here, in charge of all the slatternly nurses who disgraced the place. If there was any intention in Thorpe-Ambrose of sending a worn-out horse to the knackers, that horse was sure to be found waiting his doom in a field on this side of the town. No growth flourished in these desert regions, but the arid growth of rubbish ; and no human creatures rejoiced but the creatures of the night—the vermin here and there in the beds, and the cats everywhere on the tiles.

The sun had set, and the summer twilight was darkening. The fretful children were crying in their cradles ; the horse destined for the knacker dozed forlorn in the field of his imprisonment ; the cats waited stealthily in corners for the coming night. But one living figure appeared in the lonely suburb—the figure of Mr. Bashwood. But one faint sound disturbed the dreadful silence—the sound of Mr. Bashwood's softly-stepping feet.

Moving slowly past the heaps of bricks rising at intervals along the road ; coasting carefully round the old iron, and the broken tiles scattered here and there in his path, Mr. Bashwood advanced from the direction of the country towards one of the unfinished streets of the suburb. His personal appearance had been apparently made the object of some special attention. His false teeth were brilliantly white ; his wig was carefully brushed ; his mourning garments, renewed throughout, gleamed with the hideous and slimy gloss of cheap black cloth. He moved with a nervous jauntiness, and looked about him with a vacant smile. Having reached the first of the skeleton cottages, his watery eyes settled steadily for the first time on the view of the street before him. The next instant he started ; his breath quickened ; he leaned trembling and flushing against the unfinished wall at his side. A lady, still at some distance, was advancing towards him down the length of the street. "She's coming !" he whispered, with a strange mixture of rapture and fear, of alternating colour and paleness, showing itself in his haggard face. "I wish I was the ground she treads on ! I wish I was the glove she's got on her hand !" He burst ecstatically into those extravagant words, with a concentrated intensity of delight in uttering them that actually shook his feeble figure from head to foot.

Smoothly and gracefully the lady glided nearer and nearer, until she revealed to Mr. Bashwood's eyes, what Mr. Bashwood's instincts had recognized in the first instance—the face of Miss Gwilt.

She was dressed with an exquisitely expressive economy of outlay. The plainest straw bonnet procurable, trimmed sparingly with the cheapest white ribbon, was on her head. Modest and tasteful poverty expressed itself in the speckless cleanliness and the modestly-proportioned skirts of her light "print" gown, and in the scanty little mantilla of cheap black silk which she wore over it, edged with a simple frilling of the same material. The lustre of her terrible red hair showed itself unshrinkingly

in a plaited coronet above her forehead, and escaped in one vagrant lovelock, perfectly curled, that dropped over her left shoulder. Her gloves, fitting her like a second skin, were of the sober brown hue which is slowest to show signs of use. One hand lifted her dress daintily above the impurities of the road; the other held a little nose-gay of the commonest garden flowers. Noiselessly and smoothly she came on, with a gentle and regular undulation of the print gown; with the lovelock softly lifted from moment to moment in the evening breeze; with her head a little drooped, and her eyes on the ground—in walk, and look, and manner, in every casual movement that escaped her, expressing that subtle mixture of the voluptuous and the modest which, of the many attractive extremes that meet in women, is in a man's eyes the most irresistible of all.

"Mr. Bashwood!" she exclaimed, in loud clear tones indicative of the utmost astopishment, "what a surprise to find you here! I thought none but the wretched inhabitants ever ventured near this side of the town. Hush!" she added quickly in a whisper—"You heard right, when you heard that Mr. Armadale was going to have me followed and watched. There's a man behind one of the houses. We must talk out loud of indifferent things, and look as if we had met by accident. Ask me what I am doing. Out loud! Directly! You shall never see me again, if you don't instantly leave off trembling, and do what I tell you!"

She spoke with a merciless tyranny of eye and voice—with a merciless use of her power over the feeble creature whom she addressed. Mr. Bashwood obeyed her in tones that quavered with agitation, and with eyes that devoured her beauty in a strange fascination of terror and delight.

"I am trying to earn a little money by teaching music," she said, in the voice intended to reach the spy's ears. "If you are able to recommend me any pupils, Mr. Bashwood, your good word will oblige me. Have you been in the grounds to-day?" she went on, dropping her voice again to a whisper. "Has Mr. Armadale been near the cottage? Has Miss Milroy been out of the garden? No? Are you sure? Look out for them to-morrow, and next day, and next day. They are certain to meet and make it up again, and I must and will know of it. Hush! Ask me my terms for teaching music. What are you frightened about? It's me the man's after—not you. Louder than when you asked me what I was doing, just now; louder, or I won't trust you any more; I'll go to somebody else!"

Once more Mr. Bashwood obeyed. "Don't be angry with me," he murmured faintly, when he had spoken the necessary words. "My heart beats so—you'll kill me!"

"You poor old dear!" she whispered back, with a sudden change in her manner—with an easy satirical tenderness. "What business have you with a heart at your age? Be here to-morrow at the same time, and tell me what you have seen in the grounds. My terms are only five shillings a lesson," she went on, in her louder tone; "I'm sure that's not much,

Mr. Bashwood,—I give such long lessons, and I get all my pupils' music half-price." She suddenly dropped her voice again, and looked him brightly into instant subjection. "Don't let Mr. Armadale out of your sight to-morrow! If that girl manages to speak to him, and if I don't hear of it, I'll frighten you to death. If I *do* hear of it, I'll kiss you! Hush! Wish me good-night, and go on to the town, and leave me to go the other way. I don't want you—I'm not afraid of the man behind the houses; I can deal with him by myself. Say good-night, and I'll let you shake hands. Say it louder, and I'll give you one of my flowers, if you'll promise not to fall in love with it." She raised her voice again. "Good-night, Mr. Bashwood! Don't forget my terms. Five shillings a lesson, and the lessons last an hour at a time, and I get all my pupils' music half-price, which is an immense advantage, isn't it?" She slipped a flower into his hand—frowned him into obedience, and smiled to reward him for obeying, at the same moment—lifted her dress again above the impurities of the road—and went on her way with a dainty and indolent deliberation, as a cat goes on her way when she has exhausted the enjoyment of frightening a mouse.

Left alone, Mr. Bashwood turned to the low cottage wall near which he had been standing, and, resting himself on it wearily, looked at the flower in his hand. His past existence had disciplined him to bear disaster and insult, as few happier men could have borne them—but it had not prepared him to feel the master-passion of humanity, for the first time, at the dreary end of his life, in the hopeless decay of a manhood that had withered under the double blight of conjugal disappointment and parental sorrow. "Oh, if I was only young again!" murmured the poor wretch, resting his arms on the wall, and touching the flower with his dry fevered lips, in a stealthy rapture of tenderness. "She might have liked me when I was twenty!" He suddenly started back into an erect position, and stared about him in vacant bewilderment and terror. "She told me to go home," he said, with a startled look. "Why am I stopping here?" He turned, and hurried on to the town—in such dread of her anger, if she looked round and saw him, that he never so much as ventured on a backward glance at the road by which she had retired, and never detected the spy dogging her footsteps, under cover of the empty houses and the brick-heaps by the road-side.

Smoothly and gracefully, carefully preserving the speckless integrity of her dress, never hastening her pace, and never looking aside to the right hand or the left, Miss Gwilt pursued her way towards the open country. The suburban road branched off at its end in two directions. On the left, the path wound through a ragged little coppice, to the grazing grounds of a neighbouring farm. On the right, it led across a hillock of waste land to the high road. Stopping a moment to consider, but not showing the spy that she suspected him, by glancing behind her, while there was a hiding-place within his reach, Miss Gwilt took the path across the hillock. "I'll catch him there," she said to herself, looking up quietly

at the long straight line of the empty high road. Once on the ground that she had chosen for her purpose, she met the difficulties of the position with perfect tact and self-possession. After walking some thirty yards along the road, she let her nosegay drop—half turned round, in stooping to pick it up—saw the man stopping at the same moment behind her—and instantly went on again, quickening her pace, little by little, until she was walking at the top of her speed. The spy fell into the snare laid for him. Seeing the night coming, and fearing that he might lose sight of her in the darkness, he rapidly lessened the distance between them. Miss Gwilt went on faster and faster, till she plainly heard his footsteps behind her—then stopped—turned—and met the man face to face the next moment.

"My compliments to Mr. Armadale," she said, "and tell him I've caught you watching me."

"I'm not watching you, miss," retorted the spy, thrown off his guard by the daring plainness of the language in which she had spoken to him.

Miss Gwilt's eyes measured him contemptuously from head to foot. He was a weakly, undersized man. She was the taller, and (quite possibly) the stronger of the two.

"Take your hat off, you blackguard, when you speak to a lady," she said—and tossed his hat in an instant across a ditch by which they were standing, into a pool on the other side.

This time the spy was on his guard. He knew, as well as Miss Gwilt knew, the use which might be made of the precious minutes, if he turned his back on her, and crossed the ditch to recover his hat. "It's well for you you're a woman," he said, standing scowling at her bareheaded in the fast-darkening light.

Miss Gwilt glanced sidelong down the onward vista of the road, and saw, through the gathering obscurity, the solitary figure of a man, rapidly advancing towards her. Some women would have noticed the approach of a stranger at that hour and in that lonely place with a certain anxiety. Miss Gwilt was too confident in her own powers of persuasion not to count on the man's assistance beforehand, whoever he might be, *because* he was a man. She looked back at the spy with redoubled confidence in herself, and measured him contemptuously from head to foot for the second time.

"I wonder whether I'm strong enough to throw you after your hat?" she said. "I'll take a turn and consider it."

She sauntered on a few steps towards the figure advancing along the road. The spy followed her close. "Try it," he said brutally. "You're a fine woman—you're welcome to put your arms round me if you like." As the words escaped him, he too saw the stranger for the first time. He drew back a step and waited. Miss Gwilt, on her side, advanced a step and waited too.

The stranger came on, with the lithe light step of a practised walker, swinging a stick in his hand, and carrying a knapsack on his shoulders.

A few paces nearer, and his face became visible. He was a dark man, his black hair was powdered with dust, and his black eyes were looking steadfastly forward along the road before him.

Miss Gwilt advanced with the first signs of agitation she had shown yet. "Is it possible?" she said softly. "Can it really be you!"

It was Midwinter, on his way back to Thorpe-Ambrose, after his fortnight among the Yorkshire moors.

He stopped and looked at her, in breathless surprise. The image of the woman had been in his thoughts, at the moment when the woman herself spoke to him. "Miss Gwilt!" he exclaimed, and mechanically held out his hand.

She took it, and pressed it gently. "I should have been glad to see you at any time," she said. "You don't know how glad I am to see you now. May I trouble you to speak to that man? He has been following me, and annoying me, all the way from the town."

Midwinter stepped past her, without uttering a word. Faint as the light was, the spy saw what was coming in his face, and turning instantly, leapt the ditch by the roadside. Before Midwinter could follow, Miss Gwilt's hand was on his shoulder.

"No," she said. "You don't know who his employer is."

Midwinter stopped, and looked at her.

"Strange things have happened since you left us," she went on. "I have been forced to give up my situation, and I am followed and watched by a paid spy. Don't ask who forced me out of my situation, and who pays the spy—at least not just yet. I can't make up my mind to tell you till I am a little more composed. Let the wretch go. Do you mind seeing me safe back to my lodging? It's in your way home. May I—may I ask for the support of your arm? My little stock of courage is quite exhausted." She took his arm and clung close to it. The woman who had tyrannized over Mr. Bashwood was gone, and the woman who had tossed the spy's hat into the pool was gone. A timid, shrinking, interesting creature filled the fair skin, and trembled on the symmetrical limbs of Miss Gwilt. She put her handkerchief to her eyes. "They say necessity has no law," she murmured faintly. "I am treating you like an old friend. God knows I want one!"

They went on towards the town. She recovered herself with a touching fortitude—she put her handkerchief back in her pocket, and persisted in turning the conversation on Midwinter's walking tour. "It is bad enough to be a burden on you," she said, gently pressing on his arm as she spoke. "I mustn't distress you as well. Tell me where you have been, and what you have seen. Interest me in your journey; help me to escape from myself."

They reached the modest little lodging, in the miserable little suburb. Miss Gwilt sighed, and removed her glove before she took Midwinter's hand. "I have taken refuge here," she said, simply. "It is clean and quiet—I am too poor to want or expect more. We must say good-by, I suppose, unless—" she hesitated modestly, and satisfied herself by a quick

look round that they were unobserved—"unless you would like to come in and rest a little? I feel so gratefully towards you, Mr. Midwinter! Is there any harm, do you think, in my offering you a cup of tea?"

The magnetic influence of her touch was thrilling through him while she spoke. Change and absence to which he had trusted to weaken her hold on him, had treacherously strengthened it instead. A man exceptionally sensitive, a man exceptionally pure in his past life, he stood hand in hand in the tempting secrecy of the night, with the first woman who had exercised over him the all-absorbing influence of her sex. At his age and in his position, who could have left her? The man (with a man's temperament) doesn't live who could have left her. Midwinter went in.

A stupid, sleepy lad opened the house-door. Even he, being a male creature, brightened under the influence of Miss Gwilt. "The urn, John," she said, kindly, "and another cup and saucer. I'll borrow your candle to light my candles upstairs—and then I won't trouble you any more to-night." John was wakeful and active in an instant. "No trouble, miss," he said, with awkward civility. Miss Gwilt took his candle with a smile. "How good people are to me!" she whispered innocently to Midwinter, as she led the way upstairs to the little drawing-room on the first floor.

She lit the candles, and, turning quickly on her guest, stopped him at the first attempt he made to remove the knapsack from his shoulders. "No," she said, gently. "In the good old times, there were occasions when the ladies unarmed their knights. I claim the privilege of unarming *my* knight." Her dexterous fingers intercepted his at the straps and buckles; and she had the dusty knapsack off, before he could protest against her touching it.

They sat down at the one little table in the room. It was very poorly furnished—but there was something of the dainty neatness of the woman who inhabited it in the arrangement of the few poor ornaments on the chimney-piece, in the one or two prettily-bound volumes on the cheffonier, in the flowers on the table, and the modest little work-basket in the window. "Women are not all coquettes," she said, as she took off her bonnet and mantilla, and laid them carefully on a chair. "I won't go into my room, and look in my glass, and make myself smart—you shall take me just as I am." Her hands moved about among the tea-things with a smooth, noiseless activity. Her magnificent hair flashed crimson in the candle-light, as she turned her head hither and thither, searching, with an easy grace, for the things she wanted in the tray. Exercise had heightened the brilliancy of her complexion, and had quickened the rapid alternations of expression in her eyes—the delicious languor that stole over them when she was listening or thinking, the bright intelligence that flashed from them softly when she spoke. In the lightest word she said, in the least thing she did, there was something that gently solicited the heart of the man who sat with her. Perfectly modest in her manner, possessed to perfection of the graceful restraints and refinements of a lady, she had all the allurements that feast the eye, all the Siren-invitations

that seduce the sense—a subtle suggestiveness in her silence, and a sexual sorcery in her smile.

"Should I be wrong," she asked, suddenly suspending the conversation which she had thus far persistently restricted to the subject of Midwinter's walking tour, "if I guessed that you have something on your mind—something which neither my tea nor my talk can charm away? Are men as curious as women? Is the something—Me?"

Midwinter struggled against the fascination of looking at her and listening to her. "I am very anxious to hear what has happened since I have been away," he said. "But I am still more anxious, Miss Gwilt, not to distress you by speaking of a painful subject."

She looked at him gratefully. "It is for your sake that I have avoided the painful subject," she said, toying with her spoon among the dregs in her empty cup. "But you will hear about it from others, if you don't hear about it from me; and you ought to know why you found me in that strange situation, and why you see me here. Pray remember one thing to begin with. I don't blame your friend Mr. Armadale—I blame the people whose instrument he is."

Midwinter started. "Is it possible," he began, "that Allan can be in any way answerable ——?" He stopped, and looked at Miss Gwilt in silent astonishment.

She gently laid her hand on his. "Don't be angry with me for only telling the truth," she said. "Your friend is answerable for everything that has happened to me—innocently answerable, Mr. Midwinter, I firmly believe. We are both victims. *He* is the victim of his position as the richest single man in the neighbourhood; and *I* am the victim of Miss Milroy's determination to marry him."

"Miss Milroy?" repeated Midwinter, more and more astonished. "Why, Allan himself told me——" He stopped again.

"He told you that I was the object of his admiration? Poor fellow, he admires everybody—his head is almost as empty as this," said Miss Gwilt, smiling indicatively into the hollow of her cup. She dropped the spoon, sighed, and became serious again. "I am guilty of the vanity of having let him admire me," she went on penitently, "without the excuse of being able, on my side, to reciprocate even the passing interest that he felt in me. I don't undervalue his many admirable qualities, or the excellent position he can offer to his wife. But a woman's heart is not to be commanded—no, Mr. Midwinter, not even by the fortunate master of Thorpe-Ambrose who commands everything else."

She looked him full in the face as she uttered that magnanimous sentiment. His eyes dropped before hers, and his dark colour deepened. He had felt his heart leap in him at the declaration of her indifference to Allan. For the first time since they had known each other, his interests now stood self-revealed before him as openly adverse to the interests of his friend.

"I have been guilty of the vanity of letting Mr. Armadale admire me,

and I have suffered for it," resumed Miss Gwilt. "If there had been any confidence between my pupil and me, I might have easily satisfied her that she might become Mrs. Armadale—if she could—without having any rivalry to fear on my part. But Miss Milroy disliked and distrusted me from the first. She took her own jealous view, no doubt, of Mr. Armadale's thoughtless attentions to me. It was her interest to destroy the position, such as it was, that I held in his estimation; and it is quite likely her mother assisted her. Mrs. Milroy had her motive also (which I am really ashamed to mention) for wishing to drive me out of the house. Anyhow, the conspiracy has succeeded. I have been forced (with Mr. Armadale's help) to leave the major's service. Don't be angry, Mr. Midwinter! don't form a hasty opinion! I dare say Miss Milroy has some good qualities, though I have not found them out; and I assure you again and again that I don't blame Mr. Armadale—I only blame the people whose instrument he is."

"How is he their instrument? How can he be the instrument of any enemy of yours?" asked Midwinter. "Pray excuse my anxiety, Miss Gwilt—Allan's good name is as dear to me as my own!"

Miss Gwilt's eyes turned full on him again, and Miss Gwilt's heart abandoned itself innocently to an outburst of enthusiasm. "How I admire your earnestness!" she said. "How I like your anxiety for your friend! Oh, if women could only form such friendships! Oh, you happy, happy men!" Her voice faltered, and her convenient teacup absorbed her for the third time. "I would give all the little beauty I possess," she said, "if I could only find such a friend as Mr. Armadale has found in *you*. I never shall, Mr. Midwinter, I never shall. Let us go back to what we were talking about. I can only tell you how your friend is concerned in my misfortunes, by telling you something first about myself. I am like many other governesses; I am the victim of sad domestic circumstances. It may be weak of me, but I have a horror of alluding to them among strangers. My silence about my family and my friends exposes me to misinterpretation in my dependent position. Does it do me any harm, Mr. Midwinter, in your estimation?"

"God forbid!" said Midwinter, fervently. "There is no man living," he went on, thinking of his own family story, "who has better reason to understand and respect your silence than I have."

Miss Gwilt seized his hand impulsively. "Oh," she said, "I knew it, the first moment I saw you! I knew that you, too, had suffered, that you too had sorrows which you kept sacred! Strange, strange sympathy! I believe in mesmerism—do you?" She suddenly recollected herself and shuddered. "Oh, what have I done? what must you think of me?" she exclaimed, as he yielded to the magnetic fascination of her touch, and forgetting everything but the hand that lay warm in his own, bent over it and kissed it. "Spare me!" she said, faintly, as she felt the burning touch of his lips. "I am so friendless, I am so completely at your mercy!"

He turned away from her, and hid his face in his hands—he was

trembling; and she saw it. She looked at him, while his face was hidden from her—she looked at him with a furtive interest and surprise. "How that man loves me!" she thought. "I wonder whether there was a time once when I might have loved him?"

The silence between them remained unbroken for some minutes. He had felt her appeal to his consideration as she had never expected or intended him to feel it—he shrank from looking at her or from speaking to her again.

"Shall I go on with my story?" she asked. "Shall we forget and forgive on both sides?" A woman's inveterate indulgence for every expression of a man's admiration which keeps within the limits of personal respect, curved her lips gently into a charming smile. She looked down meditatively at her dress, and brushed a crumb off her lap with a little fluttering sigh. "I was telling you," she went on, "of my reluctance to speak to strangers of my sad family story. It was in that way, as I afterwards found out, that I laid myself open to Miss Milroy's malice and Miss Milroy's suspicion. Private inquiries about me were addressed to the lady who was my reference—at Miss Milroy's suggestion, in the first instance, I have no doubt. I am sorry to say, this is not the worst of it. By some underhand means of which I am quite ignorant, Mr. Armadale's simplicity was imposed on—and when application was made secretly to my reference in London, it was made, Mr. Midwinter, through your friend."

Midwinter suddenly rose from his chair and looked at her. The fascination that she exercised over him, powerful as it was, became a suspended influence, now that the plain disclosure came plainly at last from her lips. He looked at her, and sat down again like a man bewildered, without uttering a word.

"Remember how weak he is," pleaded Miss Gwilt gently, "and make allowances for him as I do. The trifling accident of his failing to find my reference at the address given him seems, I can't imagine why, to have excited Mr. Armadale's suspicion. At any rate, he remained in London. What he did there, it is impossible for me to say. I was quite in the dark; I knew nothing; I distrusted nobody; I was as happy in my little round of duties as I could be with a pupil whose affections I had failed to win—when, one morning, to my indescribable astonishment, Major Milroy showed me a correspondence between Mr. Armadale and himself. He spoke to me in his wife's presence. Poor creature, I make no complaint of her—such affliction as she suffers excuses everything. I wish I could give you some idea of the letters between Major Milroy and Mr. Armadale—but my head is only a woman's head, and I was so confused and distressed at the time! All I can tell you is, that Mr. Armadale chose to preserve silence about his proceedings in London, under circumstances which made that silence a reflection on my character. The major was most kind; his confidence in me remained unshaken—but could his confidence protect me against his wife's prejudice and his daughter's will?"

Oh, the hardness of women to each other! Oh, the humiliation if men only knew some of us as we really are! What could I do? I couldn't defend myself against mere imputations; and I couldn't remain in my situation after a slur had been cast on me. My pride (Heaven help me. I was brought up like a gentlewoman, and I have sensibilities that are not blunted even yet!)—my pride got the better of me, and I left my place. Don't let it distress you, Mr. Midwinter! There's a bright side to the picture. The ladies in the neighbourhood have overwhelmed me with kindness; I have the prospect of getting pupils to teach; I am spared the mortification of going back to be a burden on my friends. The only complaint I have to make is I think a just one? Mr. Armadale has been back at Thorpe-Ambrose for some days. I have entreated him, by letter, to grant me an interview; to tell me what dreadful suspicions he has of me, and to let me set myself right in his estimation. Would you believe it? he has declined to see me—under the influence of others; not of his own free will, I am sure! Cruel, isn't it? But he has even used me more cruelly still—he persists in suspecting me—it is he who is having me watched. Oh, Mr. Midwinter, don't hate me for telling you what you *must* know! The man you found persecuting me and frightening me to-night was only earning his money after all as Mr. Armadale's spy."

Once more Midwinter started to his feet; and this time the thoughts that were in him found their way into words.

"I can't believe it; I won't believe it!" he exclaimed indignantly. "If the man told you that, the man lied. I beg your pardon, Miss Gwilt; I beg your pardon from the bottom of my heart. Don't, pray don't think I doubt *you*; I only say there is some dreadful mistake. I am not sure that I understand as I ought all that you have told me. But this last infamous meanness of which you think Allan guilty, I *do* understand. I swear to you, he is incapable of it! Some scoundrel has been taking advantage of him; some scoundrel has been using his name. I'll prove it to you if you will only give me time. Let me go and clear it up at once. I can't rest; I can't bear to think of it; I can't even enjoy the pleasure of being here. Oh," he burst out desperately, "I'm sure you feel for me, after what you have said—I feel so for *you*!"

He stopped in confusion. Miss Gwilt's eyes were looking at him again; and Miss Gwilt's hand had found its way once more into his own.

"You are the most generous of living men," she said softly; "I will believe what you tell me to believe. Go," she added in a whisper, suddenly releasing his hand and turning away from him. "For both our sakes, go!"

His heart beat fast; he looked at her as she dropped into a chair and put her handkerchief to her eyes. For one moment he hesitated—the next, he snatched up his knapsack from the floor, and left her precipitately without a backward look, or a parting word.

She rose when the door closed on him. A change came over her the

instant she was alone. The colour faded out of her cheeks; the beauty died out of her eyes; her face hardened horribly with a silent despair. "It's even baser work than I bargained for," she said, "to deceive *him*." After pacing to and fro in the room for some minutes, she stopped wearily before the glass over the fireplace. "You strange creature!" she murmured, leaning her elbows on the mantel-piece, and languidly addressing the reflection of herself in the glass. "Have you got any conscience left? And has that man roused it?"

The reflection of her face changed slowly. The colour returned to her cheeks, the delicious languor began to suffuse her eyes again. Her lips parted gently, and her quickening breath began to dim the surface of the glass. She drew back from it, after a moment's absorption in her own thoughts, with a start of terror. "What am I doing?" she asked herself in a sudden panic of astonishment. "Am I mad enough to be thinking of him in *that* way?"

She burst into a mocking laugh, and opened her desk on the table recklessly with a bang. "It's high time I had some talk with mother Jezebel," she said, and sat down to write to Mrs. Oldershaw.

"I have met with Mr. Midwinter," she began, "under very lucky circumstances; and I have made the most of my opportunity. He has just left me for his friend Armadale; and one of two good things will happen to-morrow. If they don't quarrel, the doors of Thorpe-Ambrose will be opened to me again at Mr. Midwinter's intercession. If they do quarrel, I shall be the unhappy cause of it, and I shall find my way in for myself, on the purely Christian errand of reconciling them."

She hesitated at the next sentence, wrote the first few words of it, scratched them out again, and petulantly tore the letter into fragments and threw the pen to the other end of the room. Turning quickly on her chair, she looked at the seat which Midwinter had occupied; her foot restlessly tapping the floor, and her handkerchief thrust like a gag between her clenched teeth. "Young as you are," she thought, with her mind reviving the image of him in the empty chair,—"*there has been something out of the common in your life—and I must and will know it!*"

The house-clock struck the hour and roused her. She sighed, and walking back to the glass, wearily loosened the fastenings of her dress; wearily removed the studs from the chemisette beneath it, and put them on the chimney-piece. She looked indolently at the reflected beauties of her neck and bosom, as she unplaited her hair and threw it back in one great mass over her shoulders. "Fancy," she thought, "if he saw me now!" She turned back to the table, and sighed again as she extinguished one of the candles and took the other in her hand. "Midwinter?" she said, as she passed through the folding-doors of the room to her bedchamber. "I don't believe in his name, to begin with!"

The night had advanced by more than an hour before Midwinter was back again at the great house.

Twice, well as the homeward way was known to him, he had strayed out of the right road. The events of the evening—the interview with Miss Gwilt herself, after his fortnight's solitary thinking of her; the extraordinary change that had taken place in her position since he had seen her last; and the startling assertion of Allan's connection with it—had all conspired to throw his mind into a state of ungovernable confusion. The darkness of the cloudy night added to his bewilderment. Even the familiar gates of Thorpe-Ambrose seemed strange to him. When he tried to think of it, it was a mystery to him how he had reached the place.

The front of the house was dark and closed for the night. Midwinter went round to the back. The sound of men's voices, as he advanced, caught his ear. They were soon distinguishable as the voices of the first and second footman, and the subject of conversation between them was their master.

"I'll bet you an even half-crown he's driven out of the neighbourhood before another week is over his head," said the first footman.

"Done?" said the second. "He isn't as easy driven as you think."

"Isn't he?" retorted the other. "He'll be mobbed if he stops here! I tell you again, he's not satisfied with the mess he's got into already. I know it for certain he's having the governess watched."

At those words, Midwinter mechanically checked himself before he turned the corner of the house. His first doubt of the result of his meditated appeal to Allan ran through him like a sudden chill. The influence exercised by the voice of public scandal is a force which acts in opposition to the ordinary law of mechanics. It is strongest, not by concentration, but by distribution. To the primary sound we may shut our ears; but the reverberation of it in echoes is irresistible. On his way back, Midwinter's one desire had been to find Allan up, and to speak to him immediately. His one hope now was to gain time to contend with the new doubts and to silence the new misgivings—his one present anxiety was to hear that Allan had gone to bed. He turned the corner of the house, and presented himself before the men smoking their pipes in the back garden. As soon as their astonishment allowed them to speak, they offered to rouse their master. Allan had given his friend up for that night, and had gone to bed about half an hour since.

"It was my master's particular order, sir," said the head footman, "that he was to be told of it if you came back."

"It is my particular request," returned Midwinter, "that you won't disturb him."

The men looked at each other wondering, as he took his candle and left them.

Trouville-sur-Mer.

ON the coast of Normandy, in the department of Calvados, and at the mouth of the little river Touques, there has arisen, within the last quarter of a century, the most fashionable watering-place on the French side of the British Channel. According to certain imaginative antiquarians the name is a corruption of *Turris Villa*, but as not a single trace of Roman occupation has ever been discovered, and as no allusion to any such place occurs in any book or manuscript that has yet been brought to light, it is quite as probable that the true derivation of the word may be found in the fact that Trouville was, once upon a time, a hole of a town, and that it is still a town in a hole.

Some forty years ago an eminent artist, named Mozin, roaming through Normandy in search of the picturesque, chanced to alight upon what was then a mere fishing hamlet, and was so charmed with the varied beauties of the site and neighbourhood, that he filled his album with sketches, which became the talk of the artistic and pleasure-seeking world of Paris. His enthusiasm made many converts, and visitors flocked to the spot to judge with their own eyes of the justice of his praises. Their enterprise was well repaid, and every succeeding year has furthered the development of Trouville into its present goodly proportions.

Though the port and original hamlet lie somewhat in a hole, such is by no means the case with the numerous villas and chalets that stud the foot of the cliff facing the sea. For the most part these are built in imitation of the German-Swiss style, and boast of pretty gardens abundantly stocked with flowers; and nowhere do carnations, German asters, petunias, and pelargoniums flourish in greater beauty or profusion. The wild carnation, be it parenthetically remarked, grows luxuriantly on the ruined walls of William the Conqueror's old château at Bonneville. As seen from the pier-head, or from on board the Havre steamer, there are few places more coquettishly picturesque than Trouville. Immediately above the broad expanse of fine hard sand the eye rests upon a broken line of houses, of what may be called the fantastic order of architecture, painted yellow; with bright green venetian blinds, and embellished round the windows with bricks of a deep red hue. A little further off towards the other end of the *plage*, and dotting the hill-side, the dark red-brown of the mingled brick and wood-work of the chalets contrasts pleasantly with the dense masses of verdant foliage in which they seem to nestle, while silver-grey patches of restless, ever-murmuring aspens cast a quivering light over the hill-side and impart a cheerful sensation of life and motion. To the eastward the promontory of La Hève, with

its two lighthouses, stands out boldly and conspicuously, and at times the port and town of Havre-de-Grâce may be seen with tolerable distinctness; but this is a pleasure which visitors little enjoy, for it is the sure harbinger of rain. On the other side, that is, looking down channel to the south-west, an indented undulating coast-line stretches as far as the mouth of the Orne and the mussel-clad rocks known to the cow-keeping Normans as the Vaches Noires.

On the opposite side of the Toucques, and connected with Trouville by an excellent ferry and a still more excellent and considerably more modern bridge, a new and yet more fashionable watering-place is rapidly taking form and shape. This highly favoured annexe—for it was a pet of the late Duc de Morny, and is consequently still directly patronized by the Government—bears the name of Deauville, apparently because it is built upon dry sand-hillocks, barbarously levelled to suit the indolent habits of the Parisians. Had Lot's wife been turned into salt while seated in a chair, the example would have been thrown away upon your true Parisian; and it is morally certain, if there be any truth in the doctrine of development, and if in the natural as in the social system a demand will create a supply, that in the next generation, or at the latest, in the one after, the Parisian exquisite, whether male or female, will, instead of legs, be furnished with a chair as a finish to the human figure. The Prince in the *Arabian Nights*, who was marble from the waist downwards, is a fair type of the Parisian beauty of the present day, only that in her case the process of petrification has extended to the heart, compensation, however, being afforded by a corresponding softening of the brain. For all that, Deauville promises to supplant Trouville within a very brief period, and is already beginning to attract the preference of the *crème de la crème*. It enjoys the advantage of a really splendid hotel, of standing in spacious pleasure-grounds and sheltering the new and tasteful Casino. There is also a good sprinkling of comfortable villas, called *pavillons*, while a level terrace, upwards of a mile in length, affords an agreeable promenade at all times of the tide. The Hippodrome—the French equivalent for a racecourse—is likewise within gunshot of the “Hôtel du Casino;” while another advantage is the entire absence of “ancient and fish-like” smells. To English visitors the extent and firmness of the sands, covered in places with a vast quantity of beautiful shells, may be mentioned as an additional attraction; but your genuine Parisian belle asks only for sufficient space to crowd together three or four hundred rush-bottomed chairs. That is her notion of a marine Paradise. With one chair to sit upon, one to rest her feet upon, and one to protect her expansive skirts, she envies not Buddha himself, sitting on his lotus-leaf eternally cross-legged.

In one respect, Trouville will always, perhaps, be preferred to Deauville by families overburdened neither with riches nor offspring. Not only does it possess an ample store of villas capable of containing a Britannia gathering of olive branches, and of testing the resources of even *Berlinckius*

his purse, but it has also scores of small houses suitable for an exiguous purse, and a party of four or five persons. These may not be magnificently furnished, nor is the parlour adapted for the reception of fastidious company, but they are clean and not incommodious, and are sufficiently supplied with all that one really wants. As there is no entrance-hall, the street-door opens into the sitting-room; but the people of the place are so civil and well-conducted that no annoyance is ever experienced, and even pedlars, and vendors of perishable articles, go round to the back-door. It is true, that as your only window also opens out upon the street, you must either be content to re-consume your own oxygen, or submit to overhear the conversations of your neighbours and be distracted by noises multitudinous. After a little time, however, one becomes interested, in spite of oneself, in the sayings and doings of *le voisin*—not to mention *la voisine*—and the feeling of loneliness that is apt to steal over one in a strange place, full of people more or less known to each other, is chastened down to one of repose and pleasing languor. The furniture of the parlour is decidedly simple. The brick or tiled floor is guiltless of a carpet; but either a large round mat is placed under the table, or a small one is provided for the feet of each individual. A couple of upright arm-chairs, half-a-dozen ordinary chairs, with wondrously hard seats, and two foot-stools, complete the *mobilier*. On the mantelpiece there is, of course, a showy timepiece, between two monster vases, and beyond these, two glass bells, respectively covering the inevitable bandit and equally inevitable shepherdess or flower-girl in evening costume. On the first floor are two good bedrooms, and above that, two other rooms scarcely inferior, and all furnished with capital beds and bedding. The one occupied by the writer of this instructive and amusing narrative, happened to belong to a “*capitaine de long cours*,” who seems to have been in the habit of bringing home to his wife, after each voyage, some useful token of remembrance. Among the treasures thus accumulated are at least a dozen teapots of all shapes and sizes, a small jug purporting to be “a present from Swansea,” a sugar-basin, commemorating some Odd Fellows’ festival at Manchester, and an enormous pudding-basin, adorned on one side with the view of a bridge over the Wear, and on the other with the following cheerful prayer of a contented mind, springing from a sound digestion and untroubled liver:—

A little health, a little wealth,
 A little house of freedom;
 And at the end a little friend,
 With little cause to need him.

After a brief visit to the wife of his bosom, Captain Pilgrim—that might have been his name had he not been a Frenchman—being obliged to rejoin his schooner, received from his “good lady” a touching proof of the interest she took in his welfare. She had obtained the horns of a large stag-beetle, which she carefully placed on board her husband’s ship, in the sure hope that they would bring him good luck.

The chief objection to these little houses is the thinness of the party walls, whereby a snoring or too musical neighbour becomes a positive nuisance. They likewise swarm with mice, large, swarthy, and as strong-scented as musk-rats. *Item*: there are fleas, lively, hungry, and enterprising. Upon the whole, therefore, an unencumbered couple will do better to go to an hotel—and there are several excellent establishments. The best, perhaps, because commanding the best view of the sea, is the “Hôtel de Paris;” but the “Bellevue” and the “Bras d’Or” are also to be commended. Living is by no means cheap in Trouville, prices being quite equal to those at Paris, with the exception of fruit and vegetables. Fish is scarce, and not choice, as the best is packed up and sent off by rail. The hotels, however, are favoured to a certain extent, and generally provide finer fish than a private family would have any chance of purchasing in the open market.

On Wednesday mornings, the Place de l’Hôtel de Ville, in front of the “Hôtel Bellevue,” presents a very stirring scene. A large portion of the open space is covered with booths, at which are offered for sale, not only live poultry and all kinds of garden produce of good quality, and in considerable quantity, but also crockery, calico, boots and shoes, woollen goods, baskets of every form, hats, caps, and ironmongery. Iron bedsteads even, and heavy pieces of furniture, are disposed of by auction; and at times the town-crier goes about beating a drum to announce a sale of horses—an episode that is sure to create considerable sensation among the frequenters of the market. In the town itself, however, there is no lack of shops for all kinds of articles of clothing and fancy goods, kept by tradespeople from Paris, who come for the season and take their leave with the swallows. The season, to speak correctly, is supposed to commence on the 15th June, to culminate on the 15th August, and to terminate on the 15th October; after which date the gay and populous town shrinks back into its original aspect of a hamlet of fishermen. Two hotels alone remain half open—the “Bras d’Or” and the “Hôtel de la Plage;” but not even an Englishman has yet been known to brave the monotony of a winter at Trouville—not impossible because, from its unprotected position—facing every wind that blows by the north from S.W. to E.—it can hardly be regarded as a desirable winter residence.

Independently of the weekly market, or fair, there are peripatetic dealers and hawkers, who make the streets resound with their strangely modulated cries “from morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve.” At seven in the morning the postman rattles the handle of the door and shouts aloud, “*Fao-teur!*” Then a couple of fishwives, carrying between them a large basket of live shrimps, and it may be a smaller one of prawns, utter a sharp shrill cry—“*Voilà la marchande de crevettes!*” or “*Des crevettes! des bouquets!*” The first time “the present writer” heard this cry he hastened to secure a nosegay, but discovered that in “*ma Normandie*” a bouquet means nothing sweeter than a prawn. For reasons possibly not known even to themselves, the Trouville shrimps refuse to

turn red when boiled, and remain in death, as in life, of a greyish brown hue. Next is heard a dolorous and funereal note announcing the advent of a "needy knife-grinder," or a coaxing female voice invites you to buy her apricots, or "reines-claude." Presently an old woman appears in the wake of an almost stately donkey, laden with baskets of fruit and vegetables. Scarcely has the ass and his driver passed when a hand-barrow comes trolling along, and an individual with a facetious voice bellows out—"Zolis bas! Zolis bas! Demandez, m'sieurs et dames! Bas! Chaussettes!" The demand for woollen goods, such as stockings, socks, comforters, jerseys, and *p'tite* coats for children, appears to be incessant, bright colours being preferred to those of a sober hue. And now a brisk rattling sound, caused by a loose iron handle striking against a flat piece of wood, gives notice of the approach of "La marchande de gauffres," with her sweet vanilla-flavoured dainties in a tin, inscribed "Vivent les plaisirs de Bordeaux!" And so it goes on all day, varied now and then by a ragged urchin with a cracked hurdy-gurdy, or the scraping of the fiddle of one of the musicians of the "Salon," patiently practising his part in a concerted piece.

The aborigines are a fine manly race, with broad shoulders and bull necks, and with a thoroughly English cast of countenance—blue eyes, fair ruddy complexions, hair bordering on red, and a frank, honest, kindly, straightforward aspect and demeanour. Bold, hardy sailors, they manage their splendid fishing-boats with the courage and address of the old Northmen, but on shore they are the gentlest and best-natured creatures in the world. There are few more pleasing sights at Trouville than to watch these Herculean fellows standing at the doors of their cottages, each with a baby in his arms, or going out for a stroll with a little fellow toddling by his side and engrossing his whole attention. It is true they are not much troubled with the petty annoyances of a humble household, the greater part of their time being passed at sea; and no doubt the occasional repose from toil and danger exercises a soothing influence on their rugged, uncultured natures. The house exactly opposite the one in which these lines are written, is inhabited by a small colony of fishermen and their wives, with a sprinkling of little ones, who are not always "good" in the nurserymaid's acceptation of the word. When anything goes wrong in this department of the human menagerie, a middle-aged man, the father of two of the married women, undertakes to restore peace and harmony, by playing after a fashion with the fractious delinquent. The baby he continues to pacify, by shouting to her as if he were hailing the mast-head—"Ha! Marie! Ha! p'tite! Ha! diddy-dee! Paw, paw, paw, row-ri-ri-row, row-ri-ri-row, r-r-r-r-row,"—the last syllable being jerked out something like the bark of a mastiff. Loud voices, it must be owned, are one of the worst defects of these sea-dogs, and their woman-kind have also picked up the habit of screaming like seagulls before a storm. Never was there a more sober race of men. When they do indulge in anything more exciting than bad "café au lait," it is in cider;

but during a six weeks' residence not a single tipsy man has been seen. And the least thing amuses them. One evening a fishing-boat missed her opportunity of getting clear out to sea, and was obliged to run high up on the sands. All the next day she lay there idle and inactive, while her crew of three men and a boy, instead of repairing to a public-house, passed the time in playing at hop-scotch, in throwing summersaults, and in swinging on a rope hanging from the bowsprit. When the wind and tide are unfavourable the boats are towed out to the end of the pier by a long file of women, whose white cotton nightcaps go bobbing up and down in a most ludicrous fashion. How these poor women do work ! A large portion of the labours of the field is done by them, and—not for that reason, let us hope—nowhere in England will you find the land so neglected, or so overgrown with coarse weeds. When the tide is out and the river Touques carries its waters to the sea unpolluted with brine, there may be seen on either bank groups of women kneeling in little boxes, and bending over the stream, dragging the dirty linen through the running stream, or beating it upon a board placed before them. And on highdays and holidays how these women do dress out themselves and their children ! It is pitiable to look upon it, for it shows what an evil influence is being exercised upon the lower strata of society in this place by the fertile example of the Parisian visitors. To the extravagant costumes of the latter it is impossible to do justice by any attempt at description, and they are equally beyond caricature. The most delicate silks are worn as recklessly as if they were but bombazine. How many changes of costume take place in a single day, Bishop Colenso himself would be puzzled to enumerate. The effect of such bright and varied colours is pleasant enough for the spectator whose “withers are unwrung” by the milliner’s bills ; but how these bills can ever be paid is one of those things which, as Lord Dundreary would say, no fellow can understand. Bonnets are unknown, except among a few English ladies, and here and there in the case of a grandame. But, on the other hand, every variety of hat is worn, with every variety of ornament. The dress and the petticoat are equally smart and fanciful, and seem to try which shall be the shortest. From the ear enormous gold plates are suspended by way of ear-rings, and in the hand a long white polished cane of holly, or cornel wood, is carried to assist the yellow-booted feet in tripping over the hundred yards that lead from the house to the sands. That goal once reached, the party pounce upon as many chairs as they can seize without a personal encounter with some other party equally considerate, and then settle down for an hour or so’s incessant chatter. The cases are laid each over its own chair, umbrellas are opened out, and every well-dressed person who passes is subjected to a critical analysis as to the taste and costliness of her attire. When this amusement is exhausted they mount, always with the aid of the white cane, the half-dome steps leading up to the terrace or verandah of the casino ; and there again settle down like a covey of partridges. A few

stroll into the reading-room and carry off the best papers—it being of course strictly forbidden to remove them under any pretext whatever. But this is the only reading in which they ever indulge. And their industry is on a par with their love of letters. Some German ladies having appeared in public with network baskets, it suddenly became the fashion to be seen with baskets of a similar pattern, but it is doubtful if they contain anything but bonbons and chocolate. Twice a day there is instrumental music—a little thin perhaps, but decidedly good so far as it goes. Dancing lessons, also, are given, and every evening from eight to nine there is a pupils' ball, for the edification of cynical bachelors. Every Sunday and Thursday night there is a ball in the principal saloon, at which a dozen or twenty gentlemen figure with young ladies in round hats and short skirts—the cane being left to take care of the chair. Each dance seldom exceeds ten minutes in duration, at the end of which the cavalier conducts his partner to her cane, bows, and retires; but there is no attempt at conversation, and such a solecism as an interchange of ideas would be deemed ill-mannered and impertinent. It is nearly always the same men who venture to exhibit their "fantastic toe," while the bulk of their compeers look on disdainfully from the doorway. There is little, if any, intercourse between the two sexes. It is not only married people who keep apart, but the unmarried also appear indifferent to each other's society; nor is there any of that delectable "spooning" which is the great charm of an English watering-place. The consequences of this rapidly increasing alienation are naturally prejudicial. The women have become selfish, frivolous, and supercilious, while the men are growing coarse, egotistical, and regardless of everything but money and sensual enjoyments.

In addition to the regular balls and concerts at Trouville, there are frequently extra nights, uncovered by the subscription to the salon, on which more stately balls are given (though even at them full dress is not indispensable), and likewise scenic representations when a dramatic planet can be induced to gravitate in this direction. Besides, there is a theatre, in external appearance not unlike a Methodist chapel, and from time to time a *messe en musique* is announced at one or other of the churches, after which a collection is made by lady-patronesses in the gayest and most coquettish attire. Now and then, too, a choir will visit the place for a couple of days' sea-bathing, and cover their expenses by a musical mass, the collection after which is equally divided between themselves and the church favoured by their choice. Then, as if all this gaiety and dissipation were not enough for one season, the visitors have the pleasure of witnessing a race between fishing-boats, all the way from Havre, and—if the weather permit—of seeing a tolerable display of fireworks on the evening of the fête of St. Napoleon, once revered as the anniversary of the assumption of the Virgin Mary. Even if the weather be unfavourable, it is only a pleasure deferred until the following day; and, be it fine or wet, they can at least listen to a salvo of artillery, fired

during the celebration of the *Te Deum*. Nor is this all. On two consecutive days the Deauville racecourse gathers together all that is beautiful and sublime in the twin watering-places, and, according to the *Journal de Trouville et de Deauville*, "Epsom and Ascot do not offer greater attractions for real amateurs, or assemble a more numerous or more select crowd." The running is at least fair and above-board, and the horses seem to go quite as fast as their riders dare let them. In one particular race, for which five horses started, the leading jockey was perched like a monkey on his beast, No. 2 sat rigid and bolt upright, and No. 3 was trying to rise in his stirrups as if trotting, while the fourth and fifth were courteously contending which should be the hindermost.

It has already been said that the sands on either side of the harbour are admirable for their extent and firmness. It follows, therefore, that the bathing is good, especially for ladies, but it is also peculiar. The bathing-ground is equally divided into three "quartiers." One is set apart exclusively for ladies, attended or not by professional "baigneurs;" the next division is for men and women mixed; and the third for men only. The actual barrier between the different quarters is a rope. It is required, however, that in the "quartier commun," the men should don a costume nearly similar to that worn by the ladies, leaving only the arms bare, and the legs from the knee downwards. In the men's quarter a simple *caleçon* is held sufficient, though certainly not so decent as a Bengalee's dhoty. But the funniest part of the business is, that ladies go up the rope and converse across it with their unclad acquaintances of the other sex—the conversation being held in rather less than twelve inches of water. Very few venture in above "the giant bole," but the fair sex is also the most daring, and will occasionally disappear up to the waist. As a rule, the men prefer a mixture of sand and water, like the cockles, and will lie down in the back-water left by the receding tide, where the depth varies from three inches to a foot. An extra charge is made for a *cabane à flot*, that is, for taking the machine down to the water's edge, but the majority content themselves with the machines that are drawn up high and dry, and run like lamplighters over the intervening space of a hundred yards or so, past admiring groups of spectators, male and female. This, to our notions, odd proceeding bears at least one good fruit. As the feet, even if protected by list shoes, get covered with sand in racing back from the sea, it is customary to place in each machine a foot-pail of hot water, than which nothing can be imagined more refreshing, or wholesome.

No matter how strong a swimmer you may be, you cannot go beyond a certain easy distance from the shore. Two boats are kept continually moving up and down to prevent any rash, adventurous spirit from getting beyond his depth; and after all it is perhaps just as well that no one should be permitted to drown himself, to the annoyance of his neighbours. A favourite amusement, however, with men who are known to be stout swimmers, is to hire a double canoe, connected by a raised

bridge or seat, and propelled by a double-headed Indian paddle. In these, or rather, on these, caleçon-clad heroes disport themselves even in the ladies' quarter, paddling in and out in all directions, seated on high, and, with the exception of the aforesaid dhoty, as naked as on the day they were born.

At the eastern extremity of the Trouville sands are a range of low rocks covered with mussels and anemones—the latter in great variety. Towards Villerville, a tiny watering-place two and a half miles distant, whether by the road or the rocks, a queer-looking anemone may be picked up among the weeds. It is the size of a crown-piece, and is covered with a thick green leathery hide. Its feelers are seldom displayed, but it turns out of its interior economy a sort of transparent bladder, beautifully marked with thin filaments. The sea-cucumber may also occasionally, but rarely, be found on the Deauville sands, and only after a stiff gale from a particular quarter. From the gravel and blue clay of the cliff above the Trouville rocks, innumerable specimens of gryphites, echinites, ammonites, and other fossils may be gathered in very perfect and beautiful condition; but one solitary English couple alone were ever seen troubling themselves with these memorials of another age and another clime.

In the neighbourhood of Trouville are many delightful walks and rides. To the English visitor the still interesting remains of William the Conqueror's castle at Bonneville will prove almost as attractive as the field of Waterloo to a tourist at Brussels. The forest of St. Gatrin, too, is a tempting place for a picnic, while along the coast there is a pleasant drive to Honfleur in one direction, and to Villers in the exactly opposite one. The flourishing seaport town of Havre-de-Grâce, with its pretty marine suburb of Ste. Adresse, will likewise furnish abundant amusement for a couple of days, and the passage across may be effected daily in less than an hour for the trifling charge of fifteenpence. The easiest access to Trouville from England is by way of Southampton to Havre, and thence by steamer across the mouth of the Seine. The journey, however, from Paris lies through one of the most fertile districts of France, and is accomplished in little more than four hours.

Maori Sketches.

THE present stagnation of the New Zealand war is scarcely more satisfactory than the sanguinary skirmishes of last year. The events in the colony which we had hoped to civilize according to the newest recipe are eminently vexatious. If the operations of our troops had been more successful, we might comfort ourselves with the theory that we were administering with kind energy that *coup de grace* which some suppose to be the best mercy of civilized towards uncivilized nations. Distinguished bishops, eager in missionary enterprise, could be "thankful that new districts were opened to the Gospel by our arms," if the progress of our arms had not been so halting. But we cannot sing *Te Deums* when some hundred tattooed savages hold at bay some thousand of our best troops. We are puzzled by our failure. Those among us of an inquiring spirit try to comprehend Auckland politics, but our leading articles, in which we put our trust, give forth an uncertain sound, and do not rejoice over British deeds in New Zealand as loudly as usual. The aborigines' protectors prick our consciences by their pamphlets and protests. The colonists cut holes in our purse which we do not even know of till two months after the event. Yet surely in these affairs we have done nothing particularly wrong or stupid. We have sent out one of our best generals, who commands ten thousand of our best troops. Sir George Grey seems to us, if not to Sir D. Cameron, to do tolerable justice between the advancing civilizers and the retreating savages.

But it is unaccountable that these unreasonable persons should defy equally our philanthropy and our rifles. They break from our Christianity and "rush" our pickets. What sort of men are these Tamihanas and Neros that call themselves Thompsons and Naylor. Outlying colonists say that they are half-tamed cannibals with European vices and Maori lawlessness. Nor can we, in the face of late events, altogether contradict the report. Friends of humanity, with the anger proper to philanthropists, reply that our troublesome insurgents are nature's noblemen and our superiors. We could debate the question more at our ease if every mail did not increase our uncertainty as to our actual position in Wanganui and Taranaki. We grow impatient about a difficulty that costs so much. We should be glad to know that we were to receive no more telegrams headed "repulse of our troops," or even "slaughter of the Ngatamaniapotes;" but as such news may come any month we are driven to ask what are these Maories? Missionary reports, State papers, and pamphlets without end—mostly written to contradict each other—do not help us much in our inquiries. We still wonder why our savages are so deaf to the call of "progress." When we were good enough to make the treaty of Waitangi why did they

not instantly cast their tattooed skin, with its barbaric heraldry? They might have had our law if they would come to Auckland for its benefits. Why should they want a king when there are pakeha squatters who might give them British-colonial justice? It is strange that they do not see the excellence of our language and the beauty of its pliable abstractions. We almost despair of Maori nature now that they have replaced our Thirty-nine Articles by *Pai Marire*, and have got an *Angel Gabriel* of their own. What sort of man is this, to be so un-English and yet so brave?

Notwithstanding the three or four hundred volumes of New Zealand literature that exist, and the strong expression of Maori nature since 1860, we think most people will confess their ignorance of it, and may be glad of an introduction to some trustworthy sketches of "Old New Zealand," that tell us what Maori character is under its present partial and misapplied varnish. We have found in the narrative of a settler who landed in the Bay of Islands before the present confusion of Maoridom had begun, some of the many clues to our present embarrassment.* We gladly listen to a gentleman who has known how to gain such influence among the Maories, that when lately there were fears in Auckland of an outbreak among the northern tribes, eight hundred natives offered to fight under his orders. His success in earning, after long residence among them, their respect and confidence, shows that individual Englishmen may do much at once for the Maories and for themselves, while our complex form of government signally fails. English associations cannot well avoid taking for their rule English standards of conduct, and the earlier settlers and missionaries protested with reason against our system of regular government as being incomprehensible by the natives. It was, however, necessary to establish British law for the weekly tide of colonists that flowed in according to a law of supply and demand that no aborigines protection society can alter.

The settler from whose experiences we mean to quote largely, landed in Auckland not long after those days when trading ships, on anchoring, were forced to run up boarding nets. One of his first acquaintances was a rangatira, or gentleman, who had carried home fragments of the French captain Marion-Dufrène as tit-bits to his family, when that officer with sixteen of his crew were massacred according to the law of Utu. Another chief, who became afterwards a fast friend to the pakeha (foreign) rangatira, had earned for himself the surname of "Eater of his own relations." The Maories were just beginning to appreciate the advantages of European trade, though gold pieces were still chiefly used as ear ornaments. Our guide among them in these primitive times was, before he left his ship, taken possession of by a chief who was eager to increase the resources of his tribe with the iron and fish-hooks and gunpowder that the pakeha might have. The settler's first act on landing probably did much to establish the prestige or "mana" which he afterwards enjoyed in his adopted tribe. He defeated a young chief in fair wrestling, and learned that his new name

* *Old New Zealand. Auckland, 1862.*

panions thoroughly understood "fair play." He was ready to sympathize with their anxieties when they were expecting the arrival of a threatening "taua" or war party. It had been away for two years at the south, and we presume it had maintained itself without an extravagant commissariat. During its absence the now penitent tribe to which our pakeha was attached had attacked two of the hapus which had furnished to the taua a contingent of fighting men. Peace had since been formally made, but the return of the taua was an anxiety. They worked as we have lately seen that Maories can work, and strengthened the defences of their 'pa' or fort while the women provisioned it. Its triple line of fence was lashed as usual with the tough creeping plant we call supple jack to about eleven feet from the ground. It was planned with due attention to "curtains," flanking angles and traverses, for all of which the Maori language has names. When all was complete, the pakeha, who describes himself as not ignorant of our best masters of fortification, found out that his friend the "relation eater," who could neither read nor write, who had never heard of Cohorn or Vauban, could teach him certain practical contrivances well worth knowing.

The taua at last came up, and both sides went, with perfect solemnity, through various forms of defiance. They were careful to do all with strict attention to law and without needless insult. We have heard that in our war of 1845 they were painfully astonished at our soldiers, who in their attack cursed and swore at their Maori foes, though, said they, "we had certainly done nothing wrong." War-dances followed the arrival of the taua, of which our readers have probably often read the description. Peace was afterwards proclaimed, and next day, after much feasting, there was great embracing, and floods of very insincere tears were shed by both parties. We suppose that our formidable foe Rewi hardly requires, among his other demands, a similar demonstration from Sir Duncan Cameron on the occasion of our next truce in Wanganui.

By very slow degrees, and with much difficulty, the pakeha came to understand some of the laws of his new countrymen. They would have remained, probably, as incomprehensible to him as they seem to be to modern officials at Auckland, if he had not been a practical sufferer, alike by their enforcement and their neglect. In many of their customs explanation may be found of the present Maori alienation from us, and we are glad to set before our readers a sketch, however slight, of one or two among them. The settler whose account we follow is, we believe, better versed in native law than most colonists, even of his standing. Among the first branches of legislation with which he became acquainted was the law of "muru," or licensed robbing. To become a proper subject of muru he had first to become a New Zealand proprietor—not by confiscation, but by due bargain and sale.

There were about fifty different claimants to the ground he purchased. One man said his ancestors had killed off the first owners, another declared that his forefathers had driven off the second party; a third man, who seemed to be listened to with more than ordinary respect,

asserted that his ancestor had been the first possessor of all, and had never been ousted, and that this ancestor was a huge lizard that lived in a cave on the land many ages ago, and certainly there was the cave to prove it. One man required payment because his ancestors, as he affirmed, had exercised the right of catching rats on it, but which he (the claimant) had never done because there were no rats to catch except *pakeha* rats, which did not count as game. Another claimed because his grandfather had been murdered on the land, and another because his grandfather committed the murder. There was also to impede the sale an ancient wahi *urū*, or burying-ground, that had not, however, been used for two hundred years. Three months' negotiation and a great "lot of trade" was necessary to complete the transaction, which seemed at last to have been considered "tika" (correct) by the natives. Would that the Waitara *urū* Tataraimaka blocks had been gained with the same attention to "correctness." The native land-leagues, which seem unmanageable by any amount of "trade," might in that case not have formed, as they do now, the chief grievance of the colonists. It would, however, in any case have been long before our Maori subjects could have comprehended our Chancery system, their minds being already preoccupied by their own legal mysteries.

The old law of *muru* has fallen into partial disuse, probably because the natives are better supplied with the necessaries of life than when we first were acquainted with them. The constant struggle they were forced to maintain for the means of existence made them proportionably greedy of any property that was moveable. Before their possession of iron—and their knowledge of iron is not a hundred years old—the labour spent in making the simplest tool was enormous; utensils of every kind became precious to them in a degree we hardly comprehend. Every man coveted his neighbour's goods, and perpetual warfare existed as a matter of course. The race became distinguished by its military character. The necessity of hard work, combined with the necessity of fighting, and the advantages of a temperate climate, gave the Maories strength of body and an energy and perseverance that is very remarkable. They felled the tough Kauri pine with their rude blunt stones, and at a great expense of labour, time, and ingenuity, they carved from it a masterpiece of art, and an object of beauty, the war canoe. It was capable of carrying a hundred men on a distant expedition through the rough seas that surround New Zealand. The fifty years of excitement that the Maories have passed through has greatly injured their moral and physical condition. When the first straggling traders appeared along their shore speculation was intense as to their cargoes. The oracle was consulted and the ship was followed along the coast at any risk. The first craving of the natives was for muskets and gunpowder, for the existence of a tribe depended on its supply of ammunition. Competition between rival chiefs was almost unbounded, and we can easily believe the hardships undergone in preparing the large quantities of flax required

in payment for the European goods. Neglect of other crops and much starvation followed: a fresh craving resulted for instruments of husbandry, for clothing, and for iron tools to replace the common ones, that the overtaxed people had not been able to supply. Pakeha manufactures became a necessity, and lately the Maories have discovered that money best ensures possession of all they want. They continually torment themselves with plans for getting large sums at once, without the trouble of patient industry. Nor have they been altogether unsuccessful. Money is always forthcoming when they have an opportunity of buying ammunition, and we lately heard of a chief who gave three hundred sovereigns for six hundred boxes of percussion caps.

"Muru" is not so practicable now as when the Maories' property consisted mainly in clothing and tools and arms. But this law of plunder was once continually enforced as a sort of compulsory fine for offences. Some of the accidents which were counted crimes seem to us hardly punishable. But the Maories seem to have lost no occasion on which property might be legitimately circulated. If a man-child fell into the fire, and was severely burned, its father was immediately plundered to an extent that left him almost without the means of existence. His fishing-nets, his canoes, his pigs, and provisions were seized in payment of the damage that his tribe and his wife's family were supposed to have received by the loss of a male child. It is only lately that the Maories have set much value on their female infants.

Again, if the canoe of a native was upset and some of his family were drowned, the like muru was enforced, with perhaps a severe beating besides. As the neighbours who carried out the law were equally receivers of the fine and judges of its amount, it is easy to see that a Maori's chattels were a very shifting possession. But these executions were never objected to. It would in many cases have been felt as a slight not to be robbed, and to resist except as a form would have debarred the foolish sufferer from the privilege of robbing his neighbours in their turn. As a matter of honour if personally attacked he might inflict a flesh wound, but it would not have been "tika" that on these occasions any one should be killed. By the law of muru a coat that a Maori got from a trading captain has been known to pass through the hands, or rather over the backs of six different owners, and finally return to its original purchaser. The exchanges had been effected by due legal process. The settler from whose reminiscences of pre-colonial New Zealand we have quoted largely, relates how he was himself disturbed by a friend's voice shouting one early morning, "Get up, get up! I will kill you this day. You have roasted my grandfather! get up, stand up!" The pakeha turned out spear in hand, and saw his friend armed with a bayonet on the end of a long pole. The offended grandson came on with assumed fury, made some smart bangs and thrusts, which were parried by the disturbed Englishman, and then explained how his grandfather had come to be soaked. The pakeha was glad to compromise by payment of two whole

bags of shot, two blankets, divers fish-hooks, and certain figs of tobacco. A heinous crime had indeed been committed. The pakeha had on a journey made a fire at the foot of a tree, in the top of which the bones of his friend's grandfather had once been deposited, but from which they had been removed ten years before.

Cases of accidental manslaughter by a Maori of a member of his own tribe was punishable by muru, and by wholesale plunder of the criminal and his family. Murder of an enemy was on the whole meritorious, and murder of a slave of no consequence. Malicious assassination of one of the same tribe was rare, and punishable by utu, or the law of retaliation—a law, however, seldom enforced, not being so profitable as that of muru to the executors of its decrees.

As a makeweight to the tyranny of muru the law of tapu, or as we commonly say, taboo, was useful. It seems exceedingly complicated, and must have led to numberless misunderstandings with the early colonists. Evidently having its source in the great value of labour, it was framed to preserve the chattels obtained at such cost of human toil from being stolen or mislaid, or spoiled by children, or handled by any person. Deadly sickness was believed to be the certain punishment for breaking the tapu, unless the crime was involuntary, when the chief, or a tohunga (priest) could remit the consequences—somewhat in the manner that the Levitical priesthood performed the ceremonies necessary in the cleansing of the Jews. For many reasons we are not surprised that the Old Testament commends itself rather than the New to Maori capacity and prejudices. But from this predilection of theirs many inconveniences arise, as our readers can easily imagine. To give an instance of tapu. A chief of very high rank, and "mana," or prestige, was on a war expedition, by which his own personal tapu was increased two-fold, as was that of all the warriors who were with him. The party halted to dine. The portion of food set apart for the chief in a basket was more than enough for him, and the greater part remained unconsumed. The "taua" having dined moved on, and soon after a party of slaves and others who had been in the rear, came up carrying baggage. One of the new comers, a stout hungry fellow, seeing the chief's unfinished meal, ate it up before asking any questions. He had hardly finished when he was told by a horror-stricken comrade, who had remained behind when the warriors of the taua continued their march, of the dreadful act he had committed. The unfortunate delinquent was remarkable for courage, and had signalized himself in war. No sooner did he hear the fatal news than he was seized with extraordinarily violent convulsions and cramp in the stomach, which did not cease until he died about sundown the same day. To compensate for its evident uses tapu had its inconveniences. A man of any standing could not carry provisions on his back, or if he did they were useless to any one but himself. If he went into a kitchen—which was only excusable on some great emergency—all the pots, evens, and food became useless. He might light a fire for warmth, but if he had blown upon it, it could not be used for any com-

mon purpose, not even to light a pipe. If a chief whose tapu was strong asked at a pakeha's house for a draught of water, and it was unwittingly given to him in a glass or cup, the Maori rangatira was bound to break it or to carry it away, to the disgust of the European lender. The proper way to give water in such a case was to pour it from a height of one or two feet into a funnel, made by the chief's hand, who nodded his head when he had enough of the cataract.

A severe tapu, amounting to excommunication, attached to those who handled or buried the dead. In every populous village there was generally a wretch who, to escape other labour, or for some personal reason, performed the duties of an undertaker. He was therefore seldom clear of the dangers of the tapu. Old, haggard, and ragged, daubed with red paint, which is the Maori funereal colour, he might be seen sitting all day forty or fifty yards from the village thoroughfare. Twice a day food was thrown to him to gnaw as he best could, without using his hands. At night he crept into some lair of leaves and rubbish. We do not wonder when we hear that the poor wretch was often half insane. The priest's tapu was of a somewhat different sort. Our "spiritist" readers will be interested in some details of the "tohungas'" pretensions to converse with disembodied persons, and to occasional possession by an oracular spirit. Their familiar speaks in a sort of hollow whistle, and gives answers that are either most ingeniously double in their meaning, or else curiously exact in their truth.

Pai Marire is not astonishing when we remember that professed converse with familiar spirits accompanied the ill-digested Christianity of the Maories. More than one pakeha has formally consulted the oracle, and paid a high fee to the priest; nor are we surprised at this, for the Maories seem to be in advance of us, if not of our French and American cousins, in spiritism. On sufficient payment, the tohunga will even undertake to call up the spirit of any dead person. We give the story of a young chief who had been killed in battle. He had been very popular, and much respected in his tribe, and at the request of several of his nearest friends the tohunga promised to evoke his spirit, that it might answer certain questions they wished to put. The priest was to come to the village of the relations, and the interview was to take place in a large house common to all the population. The chief was the first of his tribe who could read and write. He kept a register of any remarkable events that occurred in his village. The book containing it could not be found, though his friends had searched unceasingly for it, both for its own interest, and its writer's sake. The hour appointed by the tohunga came, and at night all those interested met the priest in the house agreed upon. Fires were lighted, which gave a flickering light. The priest retired to the darkest corner. All was expectation, and the silence was only broken by the sobs of the sisters and other relations of the dead man. They were heart-breaking in their violence, while the grave silence of the men showed that to them it was a serious interview. The brother of the chief now and then wiped his eyes as they filled with tears.

About thirty persons were seated on the floor, among whom was the Englishman who relates the scene, and who found his incredulity giving way before the solemnity of the occasion. The fire gradually burned down to mere glowing charcoal, and the light was little better than darkness, when suddenly a voice came out of the gloom. "Salutation! salutation to you all! salutation! Salutation to you, my tribe! Family, I salute you! Friends, I salute you! Friend, my pakeha friend, I salute you!"

The feelings of the assembled persons were taken by storm. A cry expressive of affection and despair, such as was not good to hear, came from the sister of the dead chief, a fine, stately, and really handsome woman of about five-and-twenty. She would have rushed in the direction from whence the voice came, had not her brothers forcibly restrained her. She lay then moaning and fainting on the ground. At the same instant a young girl who was also held back by main force, cried out,—“Is it you? Truly is it you? They hold me, they restrain me, they watch me; but I go to you. The sun shall not rise! The sun shall not rise!” She fell insensible on the rush floor, and, with the other girl, was carried out. Then the spirit was heard again,—“Speak to me, the tribe; speak to me, the family; speak to me, the pakeha!” At last his brother said,—“How is it with you? Is it well with you in that country?” The answer came in strange, melancholy accents, like the sound of wind blowing into a hollow vessel. “It is well with me: my place is a good place.” The brother asked him if he had seen persons whose names he mentioned. “Yes; they are all with me.” There were some more questions and replies and directions by the spirit as to the disposal of his gun and his large tame pig. Then the pakeha asked where the missing book could be found. Its exact position in the thatch over the door was given. The chief's brother rushed out and found it, and brought the book in his hand. Soon after the spirit said, suddenly—“O tribe, farewell! My family, I go.” A general cry of farewell arose from all present. “Farewell!” again cried the spirit from deep below the ground. “Farewell!” again from high in the air. “Farewell!” once more came moaning through the distant darkness of the night.

All the people present dispersed, and quiet had been restored to the village, when the report of a musket broke the silence. The villagers, hastily armed, rushed towards a flame which was springing up, where a shed had been hastily set on fire to make a light. In the verandah of the house next to it an old man supported the dead body of the young girl who had said that she would follow her chief to the other world. She had secretly procured a loaded musket, pulled the trigger with her foot, and leaning on the muzzle, she had destroyed herself.

There was evidently decrease in the Maori population before our knowledge of them, as is testified by the large ruined hill forts, that must have required for their habitation and tenure far greater numbers than the scattered tribes of modern New Zealand. Without laying all the blame of their present gradual extinction to European disease and vice, the change in their habits caused by the use of the musket has been for their

injury. No longer forced to live on heights from which they came down to work every day in the plains, they have made their villages in the centre of their farmed land. They build their oven-like houses sometimes in mere swamps, where the water springs with the pressure of the foot. The heated atmosphere of their low huts, sometimes not more than five feet high, appears very fatal to children, and whole communities die out within two generations.

Perhaps the worst moment of their transition is over, but many causes yet exist, if not removed, for the future ruin of the Maories. Nor have we, who boast the introduction among them of our high civilization and our "progress," been able to rescue our dependent savages from the evils we have introduced to their country. Must we not question the reality of the benefits we profess to impart; or, at least, excuse the less enlightened Maories if they refuse them in some instances? Our present difficulties in New Zealand have chiefly arisen from the theory that by the treaty of Waitangi in 1840 the Maori nation agreed to hold their land under the Queen's gift, which constituted their new and sole title to it. We treat the independent tribes as if they had been for eight hundred years versed in our jumble of feudal and modern ideas. We assume that, by Captain Hobson's agreement, New Zealand is Crown property. Let us see what a northern chief thought of this celebrated charter of our sovereignty.

"Then came a chief of the Pakeha, who we heard was called a Governor. We were very glad of his arrival, because we heard he was a great chief, and we thought, he being a great chief, would have more blankets and tobacco and muskets than any of the other Pakeha people, and that he would give us plenty of these things for nothing. The next thing we heard was that the Governor was travelling all over the country with a large piece of paper, asking all the chiefs to write their names or make marks on it. We heard also that the Ngapuhi chiefs, who had made marks or written on that paper, had been given tobacco, and flour, and sugar, and many other things for having done so. We all tried to find out the reason why the Governor was so anxious to get us to make these marks. Some of us thought the Governor wanted to bewitch all the chiefs; but our Pakeha friends laughed at this, and told us that the people of Europe did not know how to bewitch people. Well, it was not long before the Governor came, and with him came other Pakeha chiefs, and also people who could speak Maori; so we all gathered together, chiefs and slaves, women and children, and went to meet him; and when we met the Governor, the speaker of Maori told us that if we put our names or even made any sort of a mark on that paper, the Governor would then protect us, and prevent us from being robbed of our cultivated land and our timber land, and everything else which belonged to us. Some of the people were very much alarmed when they heard this, for they thought that perhaps a great war expedition was coming against us from some distant country to destroy us; others said he was only trying to frighten us. The speaker of Maori then went on to tell us certain things, but the meaning of what he said was so closely concealed we have never found it out. One thing we understood

well; however, for he told us plainly that if we wrote on the Governor's paper, one of the consequences would be that great numbers of Pakehas would come to this country and trade with us, and that we should have abundance of valuable goods. We were very glad to hear this. We also believed what the speaker of Maori told us, because we saw that our old Pakeha friends who came with us to see the Governor believed it. After the speaker of Maori had ceased, then Te Tao Nui and some other chiefs came forward and wrote on the Governor's paper, and Te Tao Nui went up to the Governor and took the Governor's hand in his and licked it! We did not much like this, we all thought it so undignified; we were very much surprised that a chief such as Te Tao Nui should do so; but Te Tao Nui is a man who knows a great deal about the customs of the Pakeha. He has been to Port Jackson in a ship, and he, seeing our surprise, told us that when the great Pakeha chiefs go to see the Queen of England they do the same, so we saw that it was a straight proceeding. But after Te Tao Nui and other chiefs had made marks and written on the Governor's paper, the Governor did not give them anything. We did not like this, so some other chiefs went forward and said to the Governor, 'Pay us first, and we will write afterwards.' A chief, from Omanaia said, 'Put money in my left hand, and I will write my name with my right.' But the Governor shook his head and seemed displeased, and said he would not pay them for writing on the paper. Now, when all the people saw this they were very much vexed, and began to say one to another, 'It is wasting our labour coming here to see this Governor;' and the chiefs began to get up and to make speeches. One said, 'Come here, Governor; go back to England;' and another said, 'I am governor in my own country, there shall be no other;' and Paapahia said, 'Remain here and be governor of this island, and I will go to England and be King of England; and if the people of England accept me for their king, it will be quite just; otherwise you do not remain here.' Then many other chiefs began to speak, and there was great noise and confusion, and the people began to go away; and the paper was lying there, but there was no one to write upon it. The Governor looked vexed, and his face was very red. At this time some Pakehas went amongst the crowd and said to them, 'You are foolish; the Governor intends to pay you when all the writing is done, but it is not proper that he should promise to do so; it would be said you only wrote your names for pay; this, according to our ideas, would be a very wrong thing.' When we heard this we all began to write as fast as we could, for we were all very hungry with listening and talking so long, and we wanted to get something to eat, and we were also in a hurry to see what the Governor was going to give us. I and all my family made our marks, and we then went to get something to eat, but we found our food not half done: so when I saw that the food was not sufficiently done, I was aware that something bad would come of this business. I got for myself next morning—and for all my sons and my two brothers, and my three wives—only two blankets. On our way home we went ashore at the house of a Pakeha and got a pen and some paper, and my

son, who could write, wrote a letter for us all to the Governor, telling him to take back the blankets, and to cut our names out of the paper. It is, however, no matter; what is there in a few black marks? who cares anything about them? Well, after this the Governor died. He was bewitched, as I have heard, by a Tohunga at the south, where he had gone to get names to his paper, for that was his chief delight, to get plenty of names and marks on his paper. The paper with all the names was either buried with him, or else his relations may have kept it to lament over, and as a remembrance of him. If it is gone to England, it will not be right to let it be kept in any place where food is cooked, or where there are pots or kettles, because there are so many chiefs' names on it. It is a very sacred piece of paper: it is very good if it has been buried with the Governor."

On this valuable document, signed after this fashion by a fraction of the Maori chiefs, rests our claim to the submission of tribes who have never seen it. Ought we to strain the interpretation of such a "treaty?"

We believe that the Protestantism, perhaps more than the Christianity, of such men as the Waikato chief Tamihana, is very real. In his language, and to a certain extent in his conduct, he reminds us of the Puritan country gentlemen of our rebellion. But it is hard for us who are trained in European ideas to understand the effect of early Jewish history and abstract dogma on a race primitive as might have been the children of Gog, yet inheritors of so lengthened a past of violence and bloodshed. It is evident that they are attracted by the ancient Hebrew annals, to which they give their religious sympathies. They may not vex our bishops with theological disputes, such as the Zulu Kaffir originated; but they find more troublesome objections in Jewish precedents to our laws and government. A Hittite or a Perizzite might, with less anachronism than a modern English subject, have obeyed the instructions of a Maori god to the Ngapuhi in 1845. "You must particularly," said the Atua, or spirit, "observe all the sacred rites and customs of your ancestors; if you neglect this in the smallest particular, evil will befall you, and I also shall desert you. You who pray to the God of the missionaries, continue to do so, and in your praying see that you make no mistakes. Fight and pray. Touch not the spoils of the slain, abstain from human flesh, lest the European God should be angry, and be careful not to offend the Maori gods. It is good to have more than one god to trust to. This war party must be strictly sacred. Be brave, be strong, be patient." The Atua who so advised was of great help in a subsequent fight, by turning away the rockets and other balls from his followers. As for our "pot guns," or mortars, the natives believed at that time that their only purpose was to produce deafness in the adversary, and to keep him from sleeping. At the risk of being considered behind the New Zealand age we multiply traits of Maori thought twenty years ago, for we think they show us in some degree what is still the mental state of our insurgents. Twenty years such as those the Maories have passed can have but slightly modified the instincts of a race. Can we expect that the religious reverence of Rewi or Wi Kingi is deeper seated than that of our formidable antagonist

Heke, who led the war of 1845? "What care I," he roared out in battle, "for either men or spirits? I fear not; let the Fellow in heaven look to it. Have I not prayed to him for years? It is for him to look to me this day." Yet Heke had been a nominal Christian for many years. When we talk of Maori Christianity, we must not think even of the brilliant and liberal sister of King Matutue, Te Paea, as of a Lady Jane Grey, or of Wi Tamihana as a "judicious Hooker."

It is not to be expected that from colonial reports we should hear much of Maori poetry. Their late armed resistance has earned for the natives a "nigger" hatred, Yankee in its expression, nor even in England do we expect much sympathy with the Taillefers of Maori chivalry; yet we cannot but pause in our hurried sketch to quote the speech of Te Anu, the best spearman of the Ngapuhi, when, during the war of 1845, his friend was killed in battle by our troops:—"Farewell, Hauraki! go, taking with you your kindness and hospitality, your generosity and valour, and leave none behind you who can fill your place. Your death was noble; you revenged yourself with your own hand; you saved yourself without the help of any man. Your life was short—but so it is with heroes. Farewell, O Hauraki, farewell!" "At this time it was night," continues the Maori who describes Hauraki's end, "and the sister, and also the young wife of Hauraki, went in the dark and sat beside the river. They sat weeping silently, and spinning a cord wherewith to strangle themselves. The flax was wet with their tears. And as they did this the moon arose; so when the sister of Hauraki saw the rising moon, she broke silence and lamented aloud, and this was part of her lament:—

"It is well with thee, O Moon! You return from death
Spreading your light on the little waves. Men say, 'Behold the moon
But the dead of this world return no more. [re-appears.]
Grief and pain spring up in my heart as from a fountain;
I hasten to death for relief.
Oh! that I might eat those numerous soothsayers
Who could not foretell his death.
Oh! that I might eat the Governor,
For his was the war!"

We are relieved to find that the singer's desire to eat the Governor was not generally approved. The lament, which was very popular at first, was suppressed by the Maori authorities as not "tika."

We have wished to show our readers some scattered traits of what the Maories were before they gained even their shallow varnish of nominal civilization. We must remember that even the Tamihanas to be found in New Zealand, remarkable as they are for intelligence and even noble feeling, are not the less heirs as Maories to a recent barbarism. Have we attempted to understand our savage subjects, when we thrust on them our perfections? Have we a right to exterminate them if in places they have returned to crimes and superstitions that, however horrible, have not been unanticipated by those who knew an elder generation? Their very virtues are as different from ours as their cannibalism is unlike our state ceremonies. Splendid courage they have shown—a quality that we hope is common to our troops and their warriors. Their dash, in one or two

actions, has been equalled to the charge of Balaklava. At Te Ranga, last summer, we heard how they deliberately retired with the order of the finest troops in the world, though they were being shot down by scores. Many of them turned round, folded their arms on their chests, bowed their heads and received their death-wound in silence. There must be remarkable moral force behind this calm courage.

We do not intend to discuss late events in New Zealand, though it is plain that there is much to criticize in the manner with which we have offered what we assume to be beneficial institutions to this alien race. We do not generally shine as examples of sympathy and courtesy in our dealings with strangers, and our ignorance of the Maories has been excessive. Even those who studied their history scientifically seem to have been careless of the living Maori nature. We seem to know still less about them since they have adopted broadcloth and pale ale. Those sanguine among us think that they are ready for our machinery of life, and cannot perceive its dangers and even foolishness for them. Government edits newspapers in Maori, that a "public opinion" may be created. Yet what is public opinion likely to be in the swamps and bush to which our "land sharks" are driving the natives? We have not much faith in the trash necessarily published under such conditions. Our tattooed subjects as yet do not understand that the editorial language, to which we are so used that we make due allowance for its figures of speech, is not wilful and active deception and insult. We do, on the whole, pretty well with our laws, which have grown with our growth. We are trained, to use a quaint Maori saying, to fear the five pounds (fine), if we do not fear a higher power; but our customs are of no use to this barbarous people, and we give them no other, not even a vote in the Assembly, of which they are told to worship the perfection. Yet their faith in our institutions is touching; they try to govern by their village runangas, or parliaments, and the ancient influence of the chiefs is ruinously weakened by the "public opinion" thus created. The runangas legislate in a fashion hardly imaginable by those who believe a parliament to be your only machine for law-making. These democracies, for the chiefs follow and do not lead the general vote, issue edicts on every possible subject. They regulate, with like gravity, social etiquette and international law; they arrange sumptuary rules and ecclesiastical disputes; they follow by turns the Ten Commandments, ancient Maori law, and English Acts of Parliament; while some more original legislators develop a private code for their hapu out of their own self-consciousness. It is not extraordinary that no one should obey Maori decisions, and we have not enforced any other even in the districts within sight of Auckland. There never appears to have been obedience of any sort in Maori-land. The children, as we have seen, are a sort of common property of the tribe. Knowing that if their father punished them, they would be backed by relations eager to enforce the muru, it is not likely that young Maories practise even the usual filial submission.

Let us confess that we have introduced Anglican theories of Christ-

anity into the chaos of native ideas with the same effect as if we set a starved beggar down before a civic feast. The Maories are of the date of those ancient races who struggled for existence in the age of stone. We have nearly destroyed them with the sudden influx of our iron, and still worse of our gold, which we persist in thinking is the remedy for all savagery. The Maori revolt is the more excusable that it is instinctive. The chiefs probably could not prevent it. They cannot check that intense attachment to their land—their “mother,” as the Maories call it—which belongs to races that have not yet become commercial. The Maories fight for their soil, and the customs connected with it, and make land-leagues such as the Irish might have attempted eight hundred years ago—such as they would perhaps organize even now were they fifteen thousand miles from the Horse Guards. “Land is a living thing,” say the Maori thinkers, “and man is mortal.” We must acknowledge the good reason our barbarian dependants have for their resistance to the swarm of hungry new comers who would change the ti tree jungles into East Lothian or Norfolk farms.

Our civilization and our religious teaching seem to be alike failures, which leads us to doubt if our civilization and our religious teaching, as exhibited in New Zealand, are of the best sort. The hopeful reports of our missionaries lose their rose colour in presence of the Pai Marire religion, which has become almost universal among the insurgent tribes. The story of its invention shows that our Maori converts who can discuss the mysteries of Calvinism, and who even wear white waistcoats and possess photographic albums, are not, after all, far removed from the late believers in Maui, the Atua (god) who fished up New Zealand from the sea, and is dead a long time ago.

The new prophets of Pai Marire tell the story of its revelation thus:—A boy lying awake at Taranaki heard a voice which directed him to go to Wanganui and get a white shirt from a certain store there. To the boy's remonstrance that he had no money and knew no one there, the voice replied that he was to go, nothing doubting, and he would there meet a Jew who would give him further instructions. He went, the storekeeper let him have the shirt, and a man touching him said, “You want me.” The boy declared that he had come for nothing else. The Jew gave him twelve books to read, but he could not understand the first ten. The last two volumes, however, made everything clear to him, and he found himself able to speak all languages on the earth. Certain ceremonies were instituted, such as dancing round a pole, waving the hands, and speaking, or rather uttering sounds which they call Hebrew. The Angel Gabriel is to fight for all the followers of their new religion, to which all Maories are invited to become converts, except the Aroha and William Naylor's tribe. Those who refuse will fall dead, if not converted by a certain date. The Pakehas are to be exterminated. All the apostles of the new religion are invulnerable. If the Pakeha fires at them, his rifle bullets will turn and kill himself. If he point a sword at them, it will pierce his own body. His round shot and shell will be caught by the priests and flung back at him with greater force than powder can exert.

The Angel Gabriel is to enforce the new doctrines on pain of death if they are not believed. Fresh articles of faith, more and more debasing in their meanings, are at will promulgated by the head prophet of the superstition.

The used is convenient under the existing circumstances of the Maories, and they have certainly acted in many late instances as if they firmly believed its truth. But it is hardly reconcilable with even the broadest superstitionism. The Maories, who use, as they did at Tauranga, texts as formulas of incantation, when about "to lay an ambushade," or to "build a fortification," or to "relieve the wounded," are scarcely prepared for the religious developments of the nineteenth century.

Our readers will, we think, be inclined to agree with us that the Maories are suffering now from a surfeit of Europeanism, if we may coin the word, that is quite unsuited to their situation. In the failure of our system of government, which most writers on Maori affairs allow to be complete, their wish for a king to look after them is reasonable, if rebellious.

We give no opinion on the arguments of some that, if the English troops be withdrawn, the Maories will be unfairly dealt with by the colonists, nor on the wish of others to proceed in Maori affairs by what is called the sugar-and-flour policy. Nor do we criticize our English wish to fence off the barbarians, and leave them to their own "little wars" outside a pale that the colonial militia should keep inviolate. We think that much might still be made of Maori loyalty if an Englishman would be found sufficiently uncivilized to earn their confidence by a straightforward regard for their welfare. It is probable that this people cannot comprehend abstractions of law and order; but they might love a lawgiver and a chief. Why should they not have a lieutenant-king, who would, as young King Matutene has done, pray, according to the Book of Common Prayer, that the Queen may vanquish and overcome all her enemies, and seal his prayer with emphatic Amens? "The first confidence," says Sir W. Martin, late chief-justice of the colony, "must be a confidence in persons." If our European training render a search for the necessary "person" difficult, why should not the Maories have Tamihana or Matutene, now that they have confessed the Queen's supremacy, for their viceroy? Why should they not make "land-leagues," if it so please them, until it is due that they find their price is legitimate sale of their country? Might not the colonists, while for the present with the southern island, which is larger than England and Wales, let them be content to govern themselves, as long as they do all the newest political inventions.

Our readers will understand why we have not dwelt on the details of the late missionary murder, or on the general trend of the Maories from the civilization we have offered to them. The facts of their recent past, of which we have sketched the public and remarkable, even though their present is a disappointment.



'MAMAM MAMAM'

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER, 1865.

Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER II.

'TROUBLES NEVER COME ALONE.'



OLLY had her out-of-door things on, and she crept away as she was bidden; she lifted her heavy weight of heart and body along till she came to a field, not so very far off,—where she had sought the comfort of loneliness ever since she was a child; and there, under the hedge-bank, she sat down, burying her face in her hands, and quivering all over as she thought of Cynthia's misery, that she might not try to touch or assuage. She never knew how long she sat there, but it was long past-lunch-time when once again she stole up to her room. The door opposite was open wide,—Cynthia had quitted the house. Molly arranged her dress, and went down into the drawing-room. Cynthia and her mother were sitting

in the stern region of an armed neutrality. Cynthia's face had a look of sternness, for colour and rigidity; but she was smiling with a smiling woman had endured. Not so Mrs. Gilman: her face had a look of sternness of eyes, and she looked up and greeted Molly's entrance with a stern smile. Cynthia went out as though she had never been in the room. — 71.

opening of the door, or felt the approaching sweep of Molly's dress. Molly took up a book,—not to read, but to have the semblance of some employment which should not necessitate conversation.

There was no measuring the duration of the silence that ensued. Molly grew to fancy it was some old enchantment that weighed upon their tongues and kept them still. At length Cynthia spoke, but she had to begin again before her words came clear.

"I wish you both to know that henceforward all is at an end between me and Roger Hamley."

Molly's book went down upon her knees; with open eyes and lips she strove to draw in Cynthia's meaning. Mrs. Gibson spoke querulously, as if injured.

"I could have understood this if it had happened three months ago,—when you were in London; but now it's just nonsense, Cynthia, and you know you don't mean it!"

Cynthia did not reply; nor did the resolute look on her face change when Molly spoke at last.

"Cynthia—think of him! It will break his heart!"

"No!" said Cynthia, "it will not. But even if it did, I cannot help it."

"All this talk will soon pass away!" said Molly; "and when he knows the truth from your own self——"

"From my own self he shall never hear it. I do not love him well enough to go through the shame of having to excuse myself,—to plead that he will reinstate me in his good opinion. Confession may be—well! I can never believe it pleasant—but it may be an ease of mind if one makes it to some people,—to some person,—and it may not be a mortification to sue for forgiveness. I cannot tell. All I know is,—and I know it clearly, and will act upon it inflexibly—that——" And here she stopped short.

"I think you might finish your sentence," said her mother, after a silence of five seconds.

"I cannot bear to exculpate myself to Roger Hamley. I will not submit to his thinking less well of me than he has done,—however foolish his judgment may have been. I would rather never see him again, for these two reasons. And the truth is, I do not love him. I like him, I respect him; but I will not marry him. I have written to tell him so. That was merely as a relief to myself, for when or where the letter will reach him—— And I have written to old Mr. Hamley. The relief is the one good thing come out of it all. It is such a comfort to feel free again. It wearied me so to think of straining up to his goodness. 'Extemperate my conduct!'" she concluded, quoting Mr. Gibson's words. Yet when Mr. Gibson came home, after a silent dinner, she asked to speak with him, alone, in his consulting-room; and there laid bare the exculpation of herself which she had given to Molly many weeks before. When she had ended, she said:

"And now, Mr. Gibson,—I still treat you like a friend,—help me.

to find some home far away, where all the evil talking and gossip mamma tells me of cannot find me and follow me. It may be wrong to care for people's good opinion,—but it is me, and I cannot alter myself. You, Molly,—all the people in the town,—I have not the patience to live through the nine days' wonder. I want to go away and be a governess."

"But, my dear Cynthia,—how soon Roger will be back,—a tower of strength."

"Has not mamma told you I have broken it all off with Roger? I wrote this morning. I wrote to his father. That letter will reach to-morrow. I wrote to Roger. If he ever receives that letter I hope to be far away by that time; in Russia may be."

"Nonsense. An engagement like yours cannot be broken off, except by mutual consent. You have only given others a great deal of pain without freeing yourself. Nor will you wish it in a month's time. When you come to think calmly you will be glad to think of the stay and support of such a husband as Roger. You have been in fault, and have acted foolishly at first,—perhaps wrongly afterwards; but you don't want your husband to think you faultless?"

"Yes, I do," said Cynthia. "At any rate, my lover must think me so. And it is just because I do not love him even as so light a thing as I could love, that I feel that I could not bear to have to tell him I'm sorry, and stand before him like a chidden child to be admonished and forgiven."

"But here you are, just in such a position before me, Cynthia!"

"Yes! but I love you better than Roger; I have often told Molly so. And I would have told you, if I had not expected and hoped to leave you all before long. I could see if the recollection of it all came up before your mind; I could see it in your eyes; I should know it by instinct. I have a fine instinct for reading the thoughts of others when they refer to me. I almost hate the idea of Roger judging me by his own standard, which was not made for me, and graciously forgiving me at last."

"Then I do believe it is right for you to break it off," said Mr. Gibson, almost as if he was thinking to himself. "That poor lad! But it will be best for him too. And he'll get over it. He has a good strong heart. Poor old Roger!"

For a moment Cynthia's wilful fancy stretched after the object passing out of her grasp,—Roger's love became for the instant a treasure; but, again, she knew that in its entirety of high undoubting esteem, as well as of passionate regard, it would no longer be hers; and for the flaw which she herself had made she cast it away, and would none of it. Yet often in after years, when it was too late, she wondered, and strove to penetrate the inscrutable mystery of "what would have been."

"Still take till to-morrow before you act upon your decision," said Mr. Gibson, slowly. "What faults you have fallen into have been mere girlish faults at first,—leading you into much deceit, I grant."

"Don't give yourself the trouble to define the shades of blackness," said Cynthia, bitterly. "I am not so obtuse but what I know them all better than any one can tell me. And as for my decision I acted upon it at once. It may be long before Roger gets my letter,—but I hope he is sure to get it at last,—and, as I said, I have let his father know; it won't hurt him! Oh, sir, I think if I had been differently brought up I should not have had the sore angry heart I have. Now! No don't! I don't want reasoning comfort. I can't stand it. I should always have wanted admiration and worship, and men's good opinion. Those unkind gossips! To visit Molly with their hard words! Oh, dear! I think life is very dreary."

She put her head down on her hands; tired out mentally as well as bodily. So Mr. Gibson thought. He felt as if much speech from him would only add to her excitement, and make her worse. He left the room, and called Molly, from where she was sitting, dolefully. "Go to Cynthia!" he whispered, and Molly went. She took Cynthia into her arms with gentle power, and laid her head against her own breast, as if the one had been a mother, and the other a child.

"Oh, my darling!" she murmured. "I do so love you, dear, dear Cynthia!" and she stroked her hair, and kissed her eyelids; Cynthia passive all the while, till suddenly she started up stung with a new idea, and looking Molly straight in the face, she said,—

"Molly, Roger will marry you! See if it is not so! You too good——"

But Molly pushed her away with a sudden violence of repulsion. "Don't!" she said. She was crimson with shame and indignation. "Your husband this morning! Mine to-night! What do you take him for?"

"A man!" smiled Cynthia. "And therefore, if you won't let me call him changeable, I'll coin a word and call him consolable!" But Molly gave her back no answering smile. At this moment, the servant Maria entered the consulting-room, where the two girls were. She had a scared look.

"Is not master here?" asked she, as if she distrusted her eyes.

"No!" said Cynthia. "I heard him go out. I heard him shut the front door not five minutes ago."

"Oh, dear!" said Maria. "And there's a man come on horseback from Hamley Hall, and he says Mr. Osborne is dead, and that master must go off to the squire straight away!"

"Osborne Hamley dead?" said Cynthia, in awed surprise. Molly was out at the front door, seeking the messenger through the dusk, round into the stable-yard, where the groom sat motionless on his dark horse, flecked with foam, made visible by the lantern placed on the steps near, where it had been left by the servants, who were dismayed at this news of the handsome young man who had frequented their master's house, so full of sportive elegance and winsomeness. Molly went up to the man, whose

thoughts were lost in recollection of the scene he had left at the place he had come from.

She laid her hand on the hot damp skin of the horse's shoulder; the man started.

"Is the doctor coming, Miss?" For he saw who it was by the dim light.

"He is dead, is he not?" asked Molly, in a low voice.

"I'm afeard he is,—leastways there is no doubt according to what they said. But I have ridden hard! there may be a chance. Is the doctor coming, Miss?"

"He is gone out. They are seeking him, I believe. I will go myself. Oh! the poor old squire." She went into the kitchen—went over the house with swift rapidity to gain news of her father's whereabouts. The servants knew no more than she did. Neither she nor they had heard what Cynthia, ever quick of perception, had done. The shutting of the front door had fallen on deaf ears, as far as others were concerned. Upstairs sped Molly to the drawing-room, where Mrs. Gibson stood at the door, listening to the unusual stir in the house.

"What is it, Molly? Why, how white you look, child!"

"Where's papa?"

"Gone out. What's the matter?"

"Where?"

"How should I know? I was asleep; Jenny came upstairs on her way to the bedrooms; she's a girl who never keeps to her work, and Maria takes advantage of her?"

"Jenny, Jenny!" cried Molly, frantic at the delay.

"Don't shout, dear,—ring the bell. What can be the matter?"

"Oh, Jenny!" said Molly, half way up the stairs to meet her, "who wanted papa?"

Cynthia came to join the group; she too had been looking for traces or tidings of Mr. Gibson.

"What is the matter?" said Mrs. Gibson. "Can nobody speak and answer a question?"

"Osborne Hamley is dead!" said Cynthia, gravely.

"Dead! Osborne! Poor fellow! I knew it would be so, though,—I was sure of it. But Mr. Gibson can do nothing if he's dead. Poor young man! I wonder where Roger is now? He ought to come home."

Jenny had been blamed for coming into the drawing-room instead of Maria, whose place it was, and so had lost the few wits she had. To Molly's hurried questions her replies had been entirely unsatisfactory. A man had come to the back door—she could not see who it was—she had not asked his name: he wanted to speak to master,—master had seemed in a hurry, and only stopped to get his hat.

"He will not be long away," thought Molly, "or he would have left word where he was going. But oh! the poor father all alone." And then a thought came into her head, which she acted upon straight. "Go

to James, tell him to put the side-saddle I had in November on Nora Creina. Don't cry, Jenny. There's no time for that. No one is angry with you. Run!"

So down into the cluster of collected women Molly came, equipped in her jacket and skirt; quick determination in her eyes; controlled quivering about the corners of her mouth.

"Why, what in the world," said Mrs. Gibson—"Molly, what are you thinking about?" But Cynthia had understood it at a glance, and was arranging Molly's hastily assumed dress, as she passed along.

"I am going. I must go. I cannot bear to think of him alone. When papa comes back he is sure to go to Hamley, and if I am not wanted, I can come back with him." She heard Mrs. Gibson's voice following her in remonstrance, but she did not stay for words. She had to wait in the stable-yard, and she wondered how the messenger could bear to eat and drink the food and beer brought out to him by the servants. Her coming out had evidently interrupted the eager talk,—the questions and answers passing sharp to and fro; but she caught the words, "all amongst the tangled grass," and "the squire would let none on us touch him: he took him up as if he was a baby; he had to rest many a time, and once he sate him down on the ground; but still he kept him in his arms; but we thought we should ne'er have gotten him up again—him and the body."

"The body!"

Molly had never felt that Osborne was really dead till she heard those words. They rode quick under the shadows of the hedgerow trees, but when they slackened speed, to go up a brow, or to give their horses breath, Molly heard those two little words again in her ears; and said them over again to herself, in hopes of forcing the sharp truth into her unwilling sense. But when they came in sight of the square stillness of the house, shining in the moonlight—the moon had risen by this time—Molly caught at her breath, and for an instant she thought she never could go in, and face the presence in that dwelling. One yellow light burnt steadily, spotting the silver shining with its earthly coarseness. The man pointed it out: it was almost the first word he had spoken since they had left Hollingford.

"It's the old nursery. They carried him there. The squire broke down at the stair-foot, and they took him to the readiest place. I'll be bound for it the squire is there himself, and old Robin too. They fetched him, as a knowledgable man among dumb beasts, till th' regular doctor came."

Molly dropped down from her seat before the man could dismount to help her. She gathered up her skirts and did not stay again to think of what was before her. She ran along the once familiar turns, and swiftly up the stairs, and through the doors, till she came to the last; then she stopped and listened. It was a deathly silence. She opened the door: the squire was sitting alone at the side of the bed, holding the dead man's

hand, and looking straight before him at vacancy. He did not stir or move, even so much as an eyelid, at Molly's entrance. The truth had entered his soul before this, and he knew that no doctor, be he ever so cunning, could, with all his striving, put the breath into that body again. Molly came up to him with the softest steps, the most hushed breath that ever she could. She did not speak, for she did not know what to say. She felt that he had no more hope from earthly skill, so what was the use of speaking of her father and the delay in his coming? After a moment's pause, standing by the old man's side, she slipped down to the floor, and sat at his feet. Possibly her presence might have some balm in it; but uttering of words was as a vain thing. He must have been aware of her being there, but he took no apparent notice. There they sat, silent and still, he in his chair, she on the floor; the dead man, beneath the sheet, for a third. She fancied that she must have disturbed the father in his contemplation of the quiet face, now more than half, but not fully, covered up out of sight. Time had never seemed so without measure, silence had never seemed so noiseless as it did to Molly, sitting there. In the acuteness of her senses she heard a step mounting a distant staircase, coming slowly, coming nearer. She knew it not to be her father's, and that was all she cared about. Nearer and nearer—close to the outside of the door—a pause, and a soft hesitating tap. The great gaunt figure sitting by her side quivered at the sound. Molly rose and went to the door: it was Robinson, the old butler, holding in his hand a covered basin of soup.

"God bless you, Miss," said he; "make him touch a drop o' this: he's gone since breakfast without food, and it's past one in the morning now."

He softly removed the cover, and Molly took the basin back with her to her place at the squire's side. She did not speak, for she did not well know what to say, or how to present this homely want of nature before one so rapt in grief. But she put a spoonful to his lips, and touched them with the savoury food, as if he had been a sick child, and she the nurse; and instinctively he took down the first spoonful of the soup. But in a minute he said, with a sort of cry, and almost overturning the basin Molly held, by his passionate gesture as he pointed to the bed,—

"He will never eat again—never."

Then he threw himself across the corpse, and wept in such a terrible manner that Molly trembled lest he also should die—should break his heart there and then. He took no more notice of her words, of her tears, of her presence, than he did of that of the moon, looking through the unclosed window, with passionless stare. Her father stood by them both before either of them was aware.

"Go downstairs, Molly," said he gravely; but he stroked her head tenderly as she rose. "Go into the dining-room." Now she felt the reaction from all her self-control. She trembled with fear as she went along the moonlit passages. It seemed to her as if she should meet

Osborne, and hear it all explained; how he came to die,—what he now felt and thought and wished her to do. She did get down to the dining-room,—the last few steps with a rush of terror,—senseless terror of what might be behind her; and there she found supper laid out, and candles lit, and Robinson bustling about decanting some wine. She wanted to cry; to get into some quiet place, and weep away her over-excitement; but she could hardly do so there. She only felt very much tired, and to care for nothing in this world any more. But vividness of life came back when she found Robinson holding a glass to her lips as she sat in the great leather easy-chair, to which she had gone instinctively as to a place of rest.

"Drink, Miss. It's good old Madeira. Your papa said as how you was to eat a bit. Says he, 'My daughter may have to stay here, Mr. Robinson, and she's young for the work. Persuade her to eat something, or she'll break down utterly.' Those was his very words."

Molly did not say anything. She had not energy enough for resistance. She drank and she ate at the old servant's bidding; and then she asked him to leave her alone, and went back to her easy-chair and let herself cry, and so ease her heart.

It seemed very long before Mr. Gibson came down. He went and stood with his back to the empty fireplace, and did not speak for a minute or two.

"He's gone to bed," said he at length. "Robinson and I have got him there. But just as I was leaving him he called me back, and asked me to let you stop. I'm sure I don't know—but one doesn't like to refuse at such a time."

"I wish to stay," said Molly.

"Do you? There's a good girl. But how will you manage?"

"Oh, never mind that. I can manage. Papa"—she paused—"what did Osborne die of?" She asked the question in a low, awe-stricken voice.

"Something wrong about the heart. You wouldn't understand if I told you. I apprehended it for some time; but it is better not to talk of such things at home. When I saw him on Thursday week, he seemed better than I have seen him for a long time. I told Dr. Nicholls so. But one never can calculate in these complaints."

"You saw him on Thursday week? Why, you never mentioned it!" said Molly.

"No. I don't talk of my patients at home. Besides, I didn't want him to consider me as his doctor, but as a friend. Any alarm about his own health would only have hastened the catastrophe."

"Then didn't he know that he was ill—ill of a dangerous complaint, I mean: one that might end as it has done?"

"No; certainly not. He would only have been watching his symptoms—accelerating matters, in fact."

"Oh, papa!" said Molly, shocked.

"I've no time to go into the question," Mr. Gibson continued. "And

until you know what has to be said on both sides, and in every instance, you are not qualified to judge. We must keep our attention on the duties in hand now. You sleep here for the remainder of the night, which is more than half-gone already?"

"Yes."

"Promise me to go to bed just as usual. You may not think it, but most likely you'll go to sleep at once. People do at your age."

CHAPTER LII.

SQUIRE HAMLEY'S SORROW.

"PAPA, I think I ought to tell you something. I know a great secret of Osborne's, which I promised solemnly not to tell; but the last time I saw him I think he must have been afraid of something like this." A fit of sobbing came upon her, which her father was afraid would end in hysterics. But suddenly she mastered herself, and looked up into his anxious face, and smiled to reassure him.

"I could not help it, papa!"

"No. I know. Go on with what you were saying. You ought to be in bed; but if you have a secret on your mind you won't sleep."

"Osborne was married," said she, fixing her eyes on her father. "That is the secret."

"Married! Nonsense. What makes you think so?"

"He told me. That's to say, I was in the library—was reading there, some time ago; and Roger came and spoke to Osborne about his wife. Roger did not see me, but Osborne did. They made me promise secrecy. I don't think I did wrong."

"Don't worry yourself about right or wrong just now; tell me more about it, at once."

"I knew no more till six months ago—last November, when you went up to Lady Cumnor. Then he called, and gave me his wife's address, but still under promise of secrecy; and, excepting those two times, I have never heard any one mention the subject. I think he would have told me more that last time, only Miss Phœbe came in."

"Where is this wife of his?"

"Down in the south; near Winchester, I think. He said she was a Frenchwoman and a Roman Catholic; and I think he said she was a servant," added Molly.

"Phew!" Her father made a long whistle of dismay.

"And," continued Molly, "he spoke of a child. Now you know as much as I do, papa, except the address. I have it written down safe at home."

Forgetting, apparently, what time of night it was, Mr. Gibson sat down, stretched out his legs before him, put his hands in his pockets, and

began to think. Molly sat still without speaking, too tired to do more than wait.

"Well!" said he at last, jumping up, "nothing can be done to-night; by to-morrow morning, perhaps, I may find out. Poor little pale face!"—taking it between both his hands and kissing it; "poor, sweet, little pale face!" Then he rang the bell, and told Robinson to send some maid-servant to take Miss Gibson to her room.

"He won't be up early," said he, in parting. "The shock has lowered him too much to be energetic. Send breakfast up to him in his own room. I'll be here again before ten."

Late as it was before he left, he kept his word.

"Now, Molly," he said, "you and I must tell him the truth between us. I don't know how he will take it; it may comfort him, but I have very little hope: either way, he ought to know it at once."

"Robinson says he has gone into the room again, and he is afraid he has locked the door on the inside."

"Never mind. I shall ring the bell, and send up Robinson to say that I am here, and wish to speak to him."

The message returned was, "The squire's kind love, and could not see Mr. Gibson just then." Robinson added, "It was a long time before he'd answer at all, sir."

"Go up again, and tell him I can wait his convenience. Now that's a lie," Mr. Gibson said, turning round to Molly as soon as Robinson had left the room. "I ought to be far enough away at twelve; but, if I'm not much mistaken, the innate habits of a gentleman will make him uneasy at the idea of keeping me waiting his pleasure, and will do more to bring him out of that room into this than any entreaties or reasoning." Mr. Gibson was growing impatient though, before they heard the squire's footstep on the stairs; he was evidently coming slowly and unwillingly. He came in almost like one blind, groping along, and taking hold of chair or table for support or guidance till he reached Mr. Gibson. He did not speak when he held the doctor by the hand; he only hung down his head, and kept on a feeble shaking of welcome.

"I'm brought very low, sir. I suppose it's God's doing; but it comes hard upon me. He was my firstborn child." He said this almost as if speaking to a stranger, and informing him of facts of which he was ignorant.

"Here's Molly," said Mr. Gibson, choking a little himself, and pushing her forwards.

"I beg your pardon; I did not see you at first. My mind is a good deal occupied just now." He sat heavily down, and then seemed almost to forget they were there. Molly wondered what was to come next. Suddenly her father spoke,—

"Where's Roger?" said he. "Is he not likely to be soon at the Cape?" He got up and looked at the directions of one or two unopened letters brought by that morning's post; among them was one in Cynthia's

handwriting. Both Molly and he saw it at the same time. How long it was since yesterday ! But the squire took no notice of their proceedings or their looks.

"You will be glad to have Roger at home as soon as may be, I think, sir. Some months must elapse first; but I'm sure he will return as speedily as possible."

The squire said something in a very low voice. Both father and daughter strained their ears to hear what it was. They both believed it to be, "Roger is not Osborne!" And Mr. Gibson spoke on that belief. He spoke more quietly than Molly had ever heard him do before.

"No! we know that. I wish that anything that Roger could do, or that I could do, or that any one could do, would comfort you; but it is past human comfort."

"I do try to say, God's will be done, sir," said the squire, looking up at Mr. Gibson for the first time, and speaking with more life in his voice; "but it is harder to be resigned than happy people think." They were all silent for a while. The squire himself was the first to speak again,— "He was my first child, sir; my eldest son. And of late years we weren't"—his voice broke down, but he controlled himself—"we weren't quite as good friends as could be wished; and I'm not sure—not sure that he knew how I loved him." And now he cried aloud with an exceeding bitter cry.

"Better so!" whispered Mr. Gibson to Molly. "When he is a little calmer, don't be afraid; tell him all you know, exactly as it happened."

Molly began. Her voice sounded high and unnatural to herself, as if some one else was speaking, but she made her words clear. The squire did not attempt to listen, at first, at any rate.

"One day when I was here, at the time of Mrs. Hamley's last illness" (the squire here checked his convulsive breathing), "I was in the library, and Osborne came in. He said he had only come in for a book, and that I was not to mind him, so I went on reading. Presently, Roger came along the flagged garden-path just outside the window (which was open). He did not see me in the corner where I was sitting, and said to Osborne, 'Here's a letter from your wife!'"

Now the squire was all attention; for the first time his tear-swollen eyes met the eyes of another, and he looked at Molly with searching anxiety, as he repeated, "His wife! Osborne married!" Molly went on:

"Osborne was angry with Roger for speaking out before me, and they made me promise never to mention it to any one; or to allude to it to either of them again. I never named it to papa till last night."

"Go on," said Mr. Gibson. "Tell the squire about Osborne's call,—what you told me!" Still the squire hung on her lips, listening with open mouth and eyes.

"Some months ago Osborne called. He was not well, and wanted to see papa. Papa was away, and I was alone. I don't exactly remember

how it came about, but he spoke to me of his wife for the first and only time since the affair in the library." She looked at her father, as if questioning him as to the desirableness of telling the few further particulars that she knew. The squire's mouth was dry and stiff, but he tried to say, "Tell me all,—everything." And Molly understood the half-formed words.

"He said his wife was a good woman, and that he loved her dearly ; but she was a French Roman Catholic, and a"—another glance at her father—"she had been a servant once. That was all ; except that I have her address at home. He wrote it down and gave it me."

"Well, well !" moaned the squire. "It's all over now. All over. All past and gone. We'll not blame him,—no ; but I wish he'd a told me ; he and I to live together with such a secret in one of us. It's no wonder to me now—nothing can be a wonder again, for one never can tell what's in a man's heart. Married so long ! and we sitting together at meals—and living together. Why, I told him everything ! Too much, may be, for I showed him all my passions and ill-temper ! Married so long ! Oh, Osborne, Osborne, you should have told me !"

"Yes, he should !" said Mr. Gibson. "But I daresay he knew how much you would dislike such a choice as he had made. But he should have told you !"

"You know nothing about it, sir," said the squire sharply. "You don't know the terms we were on. Not hearty or confidential. I was cross to him many a time ; angry with him for being dull, poor lad—and he with all this weight on his mind. I won't have people interfering and judging between me and my sons. And Roger too ! He could know it all, and keep it from me !"

"Osborne evidently had bound him down to secrecy, just as he bound me," said Molly ; "Roger could not help himself."

"Osborne was such a fellow for persuading people, and winning them over," said the squire, dreamily. "I remember—but what's the use of remembering ? It's all over, and Osborne is dead without opening his heart to me. I could have been tender to him, I could. But he'll never know it now !"

"But we can guess what wish he had strongest in his mind at the last, from what we do know of his life," said Mr. Gibson.

"What, sir ?" said the squire, with sharp suspicion of what was coming.

"His wife must have been his last thought, must she not ?"

"How do I know she was his wife ? Do you think he'd go and marry a French baggage of a servant ? It may be all a tale trumped up."

"Stop, squire. I don't care to defend my daughter's truth or accuracy. But with the dead man's body lying upstairs—his soul with God—think twice before you say more hasty words, impugning his character ; if she was not his wife, what was she ?"

"I beg your pardon. I hardly know what I am saying. Did I

accuse Osborne? Oh, my lad, my lad—thou might have trusted thy old dad! He used to call me his 'old dad' when he was a little chap not bigger than this," indicating a certain height with his hand. "I never meant to say he was not—not what one would wish to think him now—his soul with God, as you say very justly—for I am sure it is there—"

"Well! but, squire," said Mr. Gibson, trying to check the other's rambling, "to return to his wife——"

"And the child," whispered Molly to her father. Low as the whisper was, it struck on the squire's ear.

"What?" said he, turning round to her suddenly, "—child! You never meant that? Is there a child? Husband and father, and I never knew! God bless Osborne's child! I say, God bless it!" He stood up reverently, and the other two instinctively rose. He closed his hands as if in momentary prayer. Then exhausted he sat down again, and put out his hand to Molly.

"You're a good girl. Thank you. Tell me what I ought to do, and I'll do it." This to Mr. Gibson.

"I am almost as much puzzled as you are, squire," replied he. "I fully believe the whole story; but I think there must be some written confirmation of it, which perhaps ought to be found at once, before we act. Most probably this is to be discovered among Osborne's papers. Will you look over them at once? Molly shall return with me, and find the address that Osborne gave her, while you are busy——"

"She'll come back again?" said the squire eagerly. "You—she won't leave me to myself?"

"No! She shall come back this evening. I'll manage to send her somehow. But she has no clothes but the habit she came in, and I want my horse that she rode away upon."

"Take the carriage," said the squire. "Take anything. I'll give orders. You'll come back again, too?"

"No! I'm afraid not, to-day. I'll come to-morrow, early. Molly shall return this evening, whenever it suits you to send for her."

"This afternoon; the carriage shall be at your house at three. I dare not look at Osborne's—at the papers without one of you with me; and yet I shall never rest till I know more."

"I will send the desk in by Robinson before I leave. And—can you give me some lunch before I go?"

Little by little he led the squire to eat a morsel or so of food; and so, strengthening him physically, and encouraging him mentally, Mr. Gibson hoped that he could begin his researches during Molly's absence.

There was something touching in the squire's wistful looks after Molly as she moved about. A stranger might have imagined her to be his daughter instead of Mr. Gibson's. The meek, broken-down, considerate ways of the bereaved father never showed themselves more strongly than when he called them back to his chair, out of which he seemed too languid

to rise, and said, as if by an after-thought: "Give my love to Miss Kirkpatrick; tell her I look upon her as quite one of the family. I shall be glad to see her after—after the funeral. I don't think I can before."

"He knows nothing of Cynthia's resolution to give up Roger," said Mr. Gibson as they rode away. "I had a long talk with her last night, but she was as resolute as ever. From what your mamma tells me, there is a third lover in London, whom she's already refused. I'm thankful that you've no lover at all, Molly, unless that abortive attempt of Mr. Coxe's at an offer, long ago, can be called a lover."

"I never heard of it, papa?" said Molly.

"Oh, no; I forgot. What a fool I was! Why, don't you remember the hurry I was in to get you off to Hamley Hall, the very first time you ever went? It was all because I got hold of a desperate love-letter from Coxe, addressed to you."

But Molly was too tired to be amused, or even interested. She could not get over the sight of the straight body covered with a sheet, which yet let the outlines be seen,—all that remained of Osborne. Her father had trusted too much to the motion of the ride, and the change of scene from the darkened house. He saw his mistake.

"Some one must write to Mrs. Osborne Hamley," said he. "I believe her to have a legal right to the name; but whether or no, she must be told that the father of her child is dead. Shall you do it, or I?"

"Oh, you, please, papa!"

"I will, if you wish. But she may have heard of you as a friend of her dead husband's; while of me—a mere country doctor—it's very probable she has never heard the name."

"If I ought, I will do it." Mr. Gibson did not like this ready acquiescence, given in so few words, too.

"There's Hollingford church-spire," said she presently, as they drew near the town, and caught a glimpse of the church through the trees. "I think I never wish to go out of sight of it again."

"Nonsense!" said he. "Why, you've all your travelling to do yet; and if these new-fangled railways spread, as they say they will, we shall all be spinning about the world; 'sitting on tea-kettles,' as Phoebe Browning calls it. Miss Browning wrote such a capital letter of advice to Miss Hornblower. I heard of it at the Millers'. Miss Hornblower was going to travel by railroad for the first time; and Dorothy was very anxious, and sent her directions for her conduct; one piece of advice was not to sit on the boiler."

Molly laughed a little, as she was expected to do. "Here we are at home, at last."

Mrs. Gibson gave Molly a warm welcome. For one thing, Cynthia was in disgrace; for another, Molly came from the centre of news; for a third, Mrs. Gibson was really fond of the girl, in her way, and sorry to see her pale heavy looks.

"To think of it all being so sudden at last! Not but what I always

expected it! And so provoking! Just when Cynthia had given up Roger! If she had only waited a day! What does the squire say to it all?"

"He is beaten down with grief," replied Molly.

"Indeed! I should not have fancied he had liked the engagement so much."

"What engagement?"

"Why, Roger to Cynthia, to be sure. I asked you how the squire took her letter, announcing the breaking of it off?"

"Oh—I made a mistake. He has not opened his letters to-day. I saw Cynthia's among them."

"Now that I call positive disrespect."

"I don't know. He did not mean it for such. Where is Cynthia?"

"Gone out into the meadow-garden. She'll be in directly. I wanted her to do some errands for me, but she flatly refused to go into the town. I am afraid she mismanages her affairs badly. But she won't allow me to interfere. I hate to look at such things in a mercenary spirit, but it is provoking to see her throw over two such good matches. First Mr. Henderson, and now Roger Hamley. When does the squire expect Roger? Does he think he will come back sooner for poor dear Osborne's death?"

"I don't know. He hardly seems to think of anything but Osborne. He seems to me to have almost forgotten every one else. But perhaps the news of Osborne's being married, and of the child, may rouse him up."

Molly had no doubt that Osborne was really and truly married, nor had she any idea that her father had never breathed the facts of which she had told him on the previous night, to his wife or Cynthia. But Mr. Gibson had been slightly dubious of the full legality of the marriage, and had not felt inclined to speak of it to his wife until that had been ascertained one way or another. So Mrs. Gibson exclaimed, "What do you mean, child? Married! Osborne married. Who says so?"

"Oh, dear! I suppose I ought not to have named it. I am very stupid to-day. Yes! Osborne has been married a long time; but the squire did not know of it until this morning. I think it has done him good. But I don't know."

"Who is the lady? Why, I call it a shame to go about as a single man, and be married all the time! If there is one thing that revolts me, it is duplicity. Who is the lady? Do tell me all you know about it, there's a dear."

"She is French, and a Roman Catholic," said Molly.

"French! They are such beguiling women; and he was so much abroad! You said there was a child,—is it a boy or girl?"

"I did not hear. I did not ask."

Molly did not think it necessary to do more than answer questions; indeed, she was vexed enough to have told anything of what her father evidently considered it desirable to keep secret. Just then Cynthia came wandering into the room with a careless, hopeless look in her face, which

Molly noticed at once. She had not heard of Molly's arrival, and had no idea that she was returned until she saw her sitting there.

"Molly, darling! Is that you? You're as welcome as the flowers in May, though you've not been gone twenty-four hours. But the house is not the same when you are away!"

"And she brings us such news too!" said Mrs. Gibson. "I'm really almost glad you wrote to the squire yesterday, for if you had waited till to-day—I thought you were in too great a hurry at the time—he might have thought you had some interested reason for giving up your engagement. Osborne Hamley was married all this time unknown to everybody, and has got a child too."

"Osborne married!" exclaimed Cynthia. "If ever a man looked a bachelor, he did. Poor Osborne! with his fair delicate elegance,—he looked so young and boyish!"

"Yes! it was a great piece of deceit, and I can't easily forgive him for it. Only think! If he had paid either of you any particular attention, and you had fallen in love with him! Why, he might have broken your heart, or Molly's either. I can't forgive him, even though he is dead, poor fellow!"

"Well, as he never did pay either of us any particular attention, and as we neither of us did fall in love with him, I think I only feel sorry that he had all the trouble and worry of concealment." Cynthia spoke with a pretty keen recollection of how much trouble and worry her concealment had cost her.

"And now of course it is a son, and will be the heir, and Roger will just be as poorly off as ever. I hope you'll take care and let the squire know Cynthia was quite ignorant of these new facts that have come out when she wrote those letters, Molly? I should not like a suspicion of worldliness to rest upon any one with whom I had any concern."

"He has not read Cynthia's letter yet. Oh, do let me bring it home unopened," said Molly. "Send another letter to Roger—now—at once; it will reach him at the same time; he will get both when he arrives at the Cape, and make him understand which is the last—the real one. Think! he will hear of Osborne's death at the same time—two such sad things! Do, Cynthia!"

"No, my dear," said Mrs. Gibson. "I could not allow that, even if Cynthia felt inclined for it. Asking to be re-engaged to him! At any rate, she must wait now until he proposes again, and we see how things turn out."

But Molly kept her pleading eyes fixed on Cynthia.

"No!" said Cynthia firmly, but not without consideration. "It cannot be. I have felt more content this last night than I have done for weeks past. I am glad to be free. I dreaded Roger's goodness, and learning, and all that. It was not in my way, and I don't believe I should have ever married him, even without knowing of all these ill-natured

stories that are circulating about me, and which he would hear of, and expect me to explain, and be sorry for, and penitent and humble. I know he could not have made me happy, and I don't believe he would have been happy with me. It must stay as it is. I would rather be a governess than married to him. I should get weary of him every day of my life."

"Weary of Roger!" said Molly to herself. "It is best as it is, I see," she answered aloud. "Only I am very sorry for him, very. He did love you so. You will never get any one to love you like him!"

"Very well. I must take my chance. And too much love is rather oppressive to me, I believe. I like a great deal, widely spread about; not all confined to one individual lover."

"I don't believe you," said Molly. "But don't let us talk any more about it. It is best as it is. I thought—I almost felt sure you would be sorry this morning. But we will leave it alone now." She sat silently looking out of the window, her heart sorely stirred, she scarcely knew how or why. But she could not have spoken. Most likely she would have begun to cry if she had spoken. Cynthia stole softly up to her after a while.

"You are vexed with me, Molly," she began in a low voice. But Molly turned sharply round.

"I! I have no business at all in the affair. It is for you to judge. Do what you think right. I believe you have done right. Only I don't want to discuss it, and paw it over with talk. I am very much tired, dear"—gently now she spoke—"and I hardly know what I say. If I speak crossly, don't mind it." Cynthia did not reply at once. Then she said,—

"Do you think I might go with you, and help you? I might have done yesterday; and you say he has not opened my letter, so he has not heard as yet. And I was always fond of poor Osborne, in my way, you know."

"I cannot tell; I have no right to say," replied Molly, scarcely understanding Cynthia's motives, which, after all, were only impulses in this case. "Papa would be able to judge; I think, perhaps, you had better not. But don't go by my opinion, I can only tell what I should wish to do in your place."

"It was as much for your sake as any one's, Molly," said Cynthia.

"Oh, then, don't! I am tired to-day with sitting up; but to-morrow I shall be all right; and I should not like it, if, for my sake, you came into the house at so solemn a time."

"Very well!" said Cynthia, half-glad that her impulsive offer was declined; for, as she said, thinking to herself, "It would have been awkward after all." So Molly went back in the carriage alone, wondering how she should find the squire, wondering what discoveries he had made among Osborne's papers; and at what conviction he would have arrived.

CHAPTER LIII.

UNLOOKED-FOR ARRIVALS.

ROBINSON opened the door for Molly almost before the carriage had fairly drawn up at the Hall, and told her that the squire had been very anxious for her return, and had more than once sent him to an upstairs window, from which a glimpse of the hill-road between Hollingford and Hamley could be perceived, to know if the carriage was not yet in sight. Molly went into the drawing-room. The squire was standing in the middle of the floor awaiting her; in fact, longing to go out and meet her, but restrained by a feeling of solemn etiquette, which prevented his moving about as usual in that house of mourning. He held a paper in his hands, which were trembling with excitement and emotion; and four or five open letters were strewed on a table near him.

"It's all true," he began; "she's his wife, and he's her husband—was her husband—that's the word for it—was! Poor lad! poor lad! it's cost him a deal. Pray God, it was not my fault. Read this, my dear. It's a certificate. It's all regular—Osborne Hamley to Marie-Aimée Scherer,—parish-church and all, and witnessed. Oh, dear!" He sat down in the nearest chair and groaned. Molly took a seat by him, and read the legal paper, the perusal of which was not needed to convince her of the fact of the marriage. She held it in her hand after she had finished reading it, waiting for the squire's next coherent words; for he kept talking to himself in broken sentences. "Ay, ay! that comes o' temper, and crabbedness. She was the only one as could; and I've been worse since she was gone. Worse! worse! and see what it has come to. He was afraid of me—ay—afraid. That's the truth of it—afraid. And it made him keep all to himself, and care killed him. They may call it heart-disease—O my lad, my lad, I know better now; but it's too late—that's the sting of it—too late, too late!" He covered his face, and moved himself backward and forward till Molly could bear it no longer.

"There are some letters," said she: "may I read any of them?" At another time she would not have asked; but she was driven to it now by her impatience of the speechless grief of the old man.

"Ay, read 'em, read 'em," said he. "Maybe you can. I can only pick'out a word here and there. I put 'em there for you to look at; and tell me what is in 'em."

Molly's knowledge of written French of the present day was not so great as her knowledge of the French of the *Mémoires de Sully*, and neither the spelling nor the writing of the letters was of the best; but she managed to translate into good enough colloquial English some innocent sentences of love, and submission to Osborne's will—as if his judgment was infallible, and faith in his purposes,—little sentences in "little language" that went home to the squire's heart. Perhaps if Molly had

read French more easily she might not have translated them into such touching, homely, broken words. Here and there, there were expressions in English; these the hungry-hearted squire had read while waiting for Molly's return. Every time she stopped, he said, "Go on." He kept his face shaded, and only repeated those two words at every pause. She got up to find some more of Aimée's letters. In examining the papers, she came upon one in particular. "Have you seen this, sir? This certificate of baptism" (reading aloud) "of Roger Stephen Osborne Hamley, born June 21, 183—, child of Osborne Hamley and Marie-Aimée his wife—"

"Give it me," said the squire, his voice breaking now, and stretching forth his eager hand. "'Roger,' that's me, 'Stephen,' that's my poor old father: he died when he was not so old as I am; but I've always thought on him as very old. He was main and fond of Osborne, when he was quite a little one. It's good of the lad to have thought on my father Stephen. Ay! that was his name. And Osborne—Osborne Hamley! One Osborne Hamley lies dead on his bed—and t'other—t'other I have never seen, and never heard on till to-day. He must be called Osborne, Molly. There is a Roger—there's two for that matter; but one is a good-for-nothing old man; and there's never an Osborne any more, unless this little thing is called Osborne: we'll take him here, and get a nurse for him; and make his mother comfortable for life in her own country. I'll keep this, Molly. You're a good lass for finding it. Osborne Hamley! And if God will give me grace, he shall never hear a cross word from me—never. He shan't be afeard of me. Oh, *my Osborne, my Osborne*" (he burst out), "do you know now how bitter and sore is my heart for every hard word as I ever spoke to you? Do you know now how I loved you—my boy—my boy?"

From the general tone of the letters Molly doubted if the mother would consent, so easily as the squire seemed to expect, to be parted from her child; the letters were not very wise, perhaps (though of this Molly never thought), but a heart full of love spoke tender words in every line. Still, it was not for Molly to talk of this doubt of hers just then; rather to dwell on the probable graces and charms of the little Roger Stephen Osborne Hamley. She let the squire exhaust himself in wondering as to the particulars of every event, helping him out in conjectures; and both of them, from their imperfect knowledge of possibilities, made the most curious, fantastic, and improbable peeps at the truth. And so that day passed over, and the night came.

There were not many people who had any right to be invited to the funeral, and of these Mr. Gibson and the squire's hereditary man of business had taken charge. But when Mr. Gibson came, early on the following morning, Molly referred the question to him, which had suggested itself to her mind, though apparently not to the squire's, what intimation of her loss should be sent to the widow, living solitary near Winchester, watching and waiting, if not for his coming who lay dead in his distant home, at

least for his letters. A letter had already come in her foreign handwriting to the post-office to which all her communications were usually sent, but of course they at the Hall knew nothing of this.

"She must be told!" said Mr. Gibson, musing.

"Yes, she must," replied his daughter. "But how?"

"A day or two of waiting will do no harm," said he, almost as if he was anxious to delay the solution of the problem. "It will make her anxious, poor thing, and all sorts of gloomy possibilities will suggest themselves to her mind—amongst them the truth; it will be a kind of preparation."

"For what? Something must be done at last," said Molly.

"Yes; true. Suppose you write, and say he is very ill; write to-morrow. I daresay they have indulged themselves in daily postage, and then she'll have had three days' silence. You say how you come to know all how and about it; I think she ought to know he is very ill—in great danger, if you like: and you can follow it up next day with the full truth. I would not worry the squire about it. After the funeral we will have a talk about the child."

"She will never part with it," said Molly.

"Whew! Till I see the woman I can't tell," said her father; "some women would. It will be well provided for, according to what you say. And she is a foreigner, and may very likely wish to go back to her own people and kindred. There's much to be said on both sides."

"So you always say, papa. But in this case I think you'll find I'm right. I judge from her letters; but I think I'm right."

"So you always say, daughter. Time will show. So the child is a boy? Mrs. Gibson told me particularly to ask. It will go far to reconciling her to Cynthia's dismissal of Roger. But indeed it is quite as well for both of them, though of course he will be a long time before he thinks so. They were not suited to each other. Poor Roger! It was hard work writing to him yesterday; and who knows what may have become of him! Well, well! one has to get through the world somehow. I'm glad, however, this little lad has turned up to be the heir. I should not have liked the property to go to the Irish Hamleys, who are the next heirs, as Osborne once told me. Now write that letter, Molly, to the poor little Frenchwoman out yonder. It will prepare her for it; and we must think a bit how to spare her the shock, for Osborne's sake."

The writing this letter was rather difficult work for Molly, and she tore up two or three copies before she could manage it to her satisfaction; and at last, in despair of ever doing it better, she sent it off without re-reading it. The next day was easier; the fact of Osborne's death was told briefly and tenderly. But when this second letter was sent off, Molly's heart began to bleed for the poor creature, bereft of her husband, in a foreign land, and he at a distance from her, dead and buried without her ever having had the chance of printing his dear features on her memory by one last long lingering look. With her thoughts full of the unknown

Aimée, Molly talked much about her that day to the squire. He would listen for ever to any conjecture, however wild, about the grandchild, but perpetually winced away from all discourse about "the Frenchwoman," as he called her; not unkindly, but to his mind she was simply the Frenchwoman—chattering, dark-eyed, demonstrative, and possibly even rouged. He would treat her with respect as his son's widow, and would try even not to think upon the female inveiglement in which he believed. He would make her an allowance to the extent of his duty; but he hoped and trusted he might never be called upon to see her. His solicitor, Gibson, anybody and everybody, should be called upon to form a phalanx of decency against that danger.

And all this time a little, young, grey-eyed woman was making her way; not towards him, but towards the dead son, whom as yet she believed to be her living husband. She knew she was acting in defiance of his expressed wish; but he had never dismayed her with any expression of his own fears about his health; and she, bright with life, had never contemplated death coming to fetch away one so beloved. He was ill—very ill, the letter from the strange girl said that; but Aimée had nursed her parents, and knew what illness was. The French doctor had praised her skill and neat-handedness as a nurse, and even if she had been the clumsiest of women, was he not her husband—her all? And was she not his wife, whose place was by his pillow? So without even as much reasoning as has been here given, Aimée made her preparations, swallowing down the tears that would overflow her eyes, and drop into the little trunk she was packing so neatly. And by her side, on the ground, sate the child, now nearly two years old; and for him Aimée had always a smile and a cheerful word. Her servant loved her and trusted her; and the woman was of an age to have had experience of humankind. Aimée had told her that her husband was ill, and the servant had known enough of the household history to know that as yet Aimée was not his acknowledged wife. But she sympathized with the prompt decision of her mistress to go to him directly, wherever he was. Caution comes from education of one kind or another, and Aimée was not dismayed by warnings; only the woman pleaded hard for the child to be left. "He was such company," she said; "and he would so tire his mother in her journeyings; and maybe his father would be too ill to see him." To which Aimée replied, "Good company for you, but better for me. A woman is never tired with carrying her own child" (which was not true; but there was sufficient truth in it to make it be believed by both mistress and servant), "and if Monsieur could care for anything, he would rejoice to hear the babble of his little son." So Aimée caught the evening coach to London at the nearest cross-road, Martha standing by as chaperon and friend to see her off, and handing her in the large lusty child, already crowing with delight at the sight of the horses. There was a "lingerie" shop, kept by a Frenchwoman, whose acquaintance Aimée had made in the days when she was a London nursemaid, and thither she betook

herself, rather than to an hotel, to spend the few night-hours that intervened before the Birmingham coach started at early morning. She slept or watched on a sofa in the parlour, for spare-bed there was none; but Madame Pauline came in betimes with a good cup of coffee for the mother, and of "soupe blanche" for the boy; and they went off again into the wide world, only thinking of, only seeking the "him," who was everything human to both. Aimée remembered the sound of the name of the village where Osborne had often told her that he alighted from the coach to walk home; and though she could never have spelt the strange uncouth word, yet she spoke it with pretty slow distinctness to the guard, asking him in her broken English when they should arrive there? Not till four o'clock. Alas! and what might happen before then! Once with him she should have no fear; she was sure that she could bring him round; but what might not happen before he was in her tender care? She was a very capable person in many ways, though so childish and innocent in others. She made up her mind to the course she should pursue when the coach set her down at Faversham. She asked for a man to carry her trunk, and show her the way to Hamley Hall.

"Hamley Hall!" said the innkeeper. "Eh! there's a deal of trouble there just now."

"I know, I know," said she, hastening off after the wheelbarrow in which her trunk was going, and breathlessly struggling to keep up with it, her heavy child asleep in her arms. Her pulses beat all over her body; she could hardly see out of her eyes. To her, a foreigner, the drawn blinds of the house, when she came in sight of it, had no significance; she hurried, stumbled on.

"Back door or front, missus?" asked the boots from the inn.

"The most nearest," said she. And the front door was "the most nearest." Molly was sitting with the squire in the darkened drawing-room, reading out her translations of Aimée's letters to her husband. The squire was never weary of hearing them; the very sound of Molly's voice soothed and comforted him, it was so sweet and low. And he pulled her up, much as a child does, if on a second reading of the same letter she substituted one word for another. The house was very still this afternoon, still as it had been now for several days; every servant in it, however needless, moving about on tiptoe, speaking below the breath, and shutting doors as softly as might be. The nearest noise or stir of active life was that of the rooks in the trees, who were beginning their spring chatter of business. Suddenly, through this quiet, there came a ring at the front-door bell that sounded, and went on sounding, through the house, pulled by an ignorant vigorous hand. Molly stopped reading; she and the squire looked at each other in surprised dismay. Perhaps a thought of Roger's sudden (and impossible) return was in the mind of each; but neither spoke. They heard Robinson hurrying to answer the unwonted summons. They listened; but they heard no more. There was little more to hear. When the old servant opened the door, a lady with a child

in her arms stood there. She gasped out her ready-prepared English sentence.

"Can I see Mr. Osborne Hamley? He is ill, I know; but I am his wife."

Robinson had been aware that there was *some* mystery, long suspected by the servants, and come to light at last to the master,—he had guessed that there was a young woman in the case; but when she stood there before him, asking for her dead husband as if he were living, any presence of mind Robinson might have had forsook him; he could not tell her the truth,—he could only leave the door open, and say to her, "Wait awhile, I'll come back," and betake himself to the drawing-room where Molly was, he knew. He went up to her in a flutter and a hurry, and whispered something to her which turned her white with dismay.

"What is it? What is it?" said the squire, trembling with excitement. "Don't keep it from me. I can bear it. Roger——"

They both thought he was going to faint; he had risen up and came close to Molly; suspense would be worse than anything.

"Mrs. Osborne Hamley is here," said Molly. "I wrote to tell her her husband was very ill, and she has come."

"She does not know what has happened, seemingly," said Robinson.

"I can't see her—I can't see her," said the squire, shrinking away into a corner. "You will go, Molly, won't you? You'll go."

Molly stood for a moment or two, irresolute. She, too, shrank from the interview. Robinson put in his word: "She looks but a weakly thing, and has carried a big baby, choose how far, I did not stop to ask."

At this instant the door softly opened, and right into the midst of them came the little figure in grey, looking ready to fall with the weight of her child.

"You are Molly," said she, not seeing the squire at once. "The lady who wrote the letter; he spoke of you sometimes. You will let me go to him."

Molly did not answer, except that at such moments the eyes speak solemnly and comprehensively. Aimée read their meaning. All she said was,—*"He is not—oh, my husband—my husband!"* Her arms relaxed, her figure swayed, the child screamed and held out his arms for help. That help was given him by his grandfather, just before Aimée fell senseless on the floor.

"Maman, maman!" cried the little fellow, now striving and fighting to get back to her, where she lay; he fought so lustily that the squire had to put him down, and he crawled to the poor inanimate body, behind which sat Molly, holding the head; whilst Robinson rushed away for water, wine, and more womankind.

"Poor thing, poor thing!" said the squire, bending over her, and crying afeak over her suffering. "She is but young, Molly, and she must have loved him dearly."

"To be sure!" said Molly, quickly. She was untying the bonnet,

and taking off the worn, but neatly mended gloves ; there was the soft luxuriant black hair, shading the pale, innocent face,—the little notable-looking brown hands, with the wedding-ring for sole ornament. The child clustered his fingers round one of hers, and nestled up against her with his plaintive cry, getting more and more into a burst of wailing : “Maman, maman !” At the growing acuteness of his imploring, her hand moved, her lips quivered, consciousness came partially back. She did not open her eyes, but great heavy tears stole out from beneath her eyelashes. Molly held her head against her own breast ; and they tried to give her wine,—which she shrank from—water, which she did not reject ; that was all. At last she tried to speak. “Take me away,” she said, “into the dark. Leave me alone.”

So Molly and the women lifted her up and carried her away, and laid her on the bed, in the best bed-chamber in the house, and darkened the already shaded light. She was like an unconscious corpse herself, in that she offered neither assistance nor resistance to all that they were doing. But just before Molly was leaving the room to take up her watch outside the door, she felt rather than heard that Aimée spoke to her.

“Food—bread and milk for baby.” But when they brought her food herself, she only shrank away and turned her face to the wall without a word. In the hurry the child had been left with Robinson and the squire. For some unknown, but most fortunate reason, he took a dislike to Robinson’s red face and hoarse voice, and showed a most decided preference for his grandfather. When Molly came down she found the squire feeding the child, with more of peace upon his face than there had been for all these days. The boy was every now and then leaving off taking his bread and milk to show his dislike to Robinson by word and gesture : a proceeding which only amused the old servant, while it highly delighted the more favoured squire.

“She is lying very still, but she will neither speak nor eat. I don’t even think she is crying,” said Molly, volunteering this account, for the squire was for the moment too much absorbed in his grandson to ask many questions.

Robinson put in his word : “Dick Hayward, he’s Boots at the Hamley Arms, says the coach she come by started at five this morning from London, and the passengers said she’d been crying a deal on the road, when she thought folks were not noticing ; and she never came in to meals with the rest, but stopped feeding her child.”

“She’ll be tired out ; we must let her rest,” said the squire. “And I do believe this little chap is going to sleep in my arms. God bless him.” But Molly stole out, and sent off a lad to Hollingford with a note to her father. Her heart had warmed towards the poor stranger, and she felt uncertain as to what ought to be the course pursued in her case.

She went up from time to time to look at the girl, scarce older than herself, who lay there with her eyes open, but as motionless as death. She softly covered her over, and let her feel the sympathetic presence from

time to time; and that was all she was allowed to do. The squire was curiously absorbed in the child; but Molly's supreme tenderness was for the mother. Not but what she admired the sturdy, gallant, healthy little fellow, whose every limb, and square inch of clothing, showed the tender and thrifty care that had been taken of him. By-and-by the squire said in a whisper;—

"She is not like a Frenchwoman, is she, Molly?"

"I don't know. I don't know what Frenchwomen are like. People say Cynthia is French."

"And she did not look like a servant? We won't speak of Cynthia since she's served my Roger so. Why, I began to think, as soon as I could think after *that*, how I would make Roger and her happy, and have them married at once; and then came that letter! I never wanted her for a daughter-in-law, not I. But he did, it seems; and he was not one for wanting many things for himself. But it's all over now; only we won't talk of her; and maybe, as you say, she was more French than English. This poor thing looks like a gentlewoman, I think. I hope she's got friends who'll take care of her,—she can't be above twenty. I thought she must be older than my poor lad!"

"She's a gentle, pretty creature," said Molly. "But—but I sometimes think it has killed her; she lies like one dead." And Molly could not keep from crying softly at the thought.

"Nay, nay!" said the squire. "It's not so easy to break one's heart. Sometimes I've wished it were. But one has to go on living—all the appointed days, as it says in the Bible. But we'll do our best for her. We'll not think of letting her go away till she's fit to travel."

Molly wondered in her heart about this going away, on which the squire seemed fully resolved. She was sure that he intended to keep the child; perhaps he had a legal right to do so;—but would the mother ever part from it? Her father, however, would solve the difficulty,—her father, whom she always looked to as so clear-seeing and experienced. She watched and waited for his coming. The February evening drew on; the child lay asleep in the squire's arms till his grandfather grew tired, and laid him down on the sofa: the large square-cornered yellow sofa upon which Mrs. Hamley used to sit, supported by pillows in a half-reclining position. Since her time it had been placed against the wall, and had served merely as a piece of furniture to fill up the room. But once again a human figure was lying upon it; a little human creature, like a cherub in some old Italian picture. The squire remembered his wife as he put the child down. He thought of her as he said to Molly,—

"How pleased she would have been!" But Molly thought of the young widow upstairs. Aimée was her "she" at the first moment. Presently,—but it seemed a long long time first,—she heard the quick prompt sounds, which told of her father's arrival. In he came—to the room as yet only lighted by the fitful blaze of the fire.

CHAPTER LIV.

MOLLY GIBSON'S WORTH IS DISCOVERED.

Mr. Gibson came in rubbing his hands after his frosty ride. Molly judged from the look in his eye that he had been fully informed of the present state of things at the Hall by some one. But he simply went up to and greeted the squire, and waited to hear what was said to him. The squire was fumbling at the taper on the writing-table, and before he answered much he lighted it, and signing to his friend to follow him, he went softly to the sofa and showed him the sleeping child, taking the utmost care not to arouse it by flare or sound.

"Well! this is a fine young gentleman," said Mr. Gibson, returning to the fire rather sooner than the squire expected. "And you've got the mother here, I understand. Mrs. Osborne Hamley, as we must call her, poor thing! It's a sad coming home to her; for I hear she knew nothing of his death." He spoke without exactly addressing any one, so that either Molly or the squire might answer as they liked. The squire said,—

"Yes! She has felt it a terrible shock. She's upstairs in the best bedroom. I should like you to see her, Gibson, if she'll let you. We must do our duty by her, for my poor lad's sake. I wish he could have seen his boy lying there; I do. I daresay it preyed on him to have to keep it all to himself. He might ha' known me, though. He might ha' known my bark was waur than my bite. It's all over now, though; and God forgive me if I was too sharp. I'm punished now."

Molly grew impatient on the mother's behalf.

"Papa, I feel as if she was very ill; perhaps worse than we think. Will you go and see her at once?"

Mr. Gibson followed her upstairs, and the squire came too, thinking that he would do his duty now, and even feeling some self-satisfaction at conquering his desire to stay with the child. They went into the room where she had been taken. She lay quite still in the same position as at first. Her eyes were open and tearless, fixed on the wall. Mr. Gibson spoke to her, but she did not answer; he lifted her hand to feel her pulse; she never noticed.

"Bring me some wine at once, and order some beef-tea," he said to Molly.

But when he tried to put the wine into her mouth as she lay there on her side, she made no effort to receive or swallow it, and it ran out upon the pillow. Mr. Gibson left the room abruptly; Molly chafed the little inanimate hand; the squire stood by in dumb dismay, touched in spite of himself by the death-in-life of one so young, and who must have been so much beloved.

Mr. Gibson came back two steps at a time; he was carrying the half-awakened child in his arms. He did not scruple to rouse him into yet further wakefulness—did not grieve to hear him begin to wail and cry.

His eyes were on the figure upon the bed, which at that sound quivered all through; and when her child was laid at her back, and began caressingly to scramble yet closer, Aimée turned round, and took him in her arms, and lulled him and soothed him with the soft wont of mother's love.

Before she lost this faint consciousness, which was habit or instinct rather than thought, Mr. Gibson spoke to her in French. The child's one word of "maman" had given him this clue. It was the language sure to be most intelligible to her dulled brain; and as it happened,—only Mr. Gibson did not think of that—it was the language in which she had been commanded, and had learnt to obey.

Mr. Gibson's tongue was a little stiff at first, but by-and-by he spoke it with all his old readiness. He extorted from her short answers at first, then longer ones, and from time to time he plied her with little drops of wine, until some further nourishment should be at hand. Molly was struck by her father's low tones of comfort and sympathy, although she could not follow what was said quickly enough to catch the meaning of what passed.

By-and-by, however, when her father had done all that he could, and they were once more downstairs, he told them more about her journey than they yet knew. The hurry, the sense of acting in defiance of a prohibition, the over-mastering anxiety, the broken night, and fatigue of the journey, had ill prepared her for the shock at last, and Mr. Gibson was seriously alarmed for the consequences. She had wandered strangely in her replies to him; he had perceived that she was wandering, and had made great efforts to recall her senses; but Mr. Gibson foresaw that some bodily illness was coming on, and stopped late that night, arranging many things with Molly and the squire. One—the only—comfort arising from her state was, the probability that she would be entirely unconscious by the morrow—the day of the funeral. Worn out by the contending emotions of the day, the squire seemed now unable to look beyond the wrenoh and trial of the next twelve hours. He sate with his head in his hands, declining to go to bed, refusing to dwell on the thought of his grandchild—not three hours ago such a darling in his eyes. Mr. Gibson gave some instructions to one of the maid-servants as to the watch she was to keep by Mrs. Osborne Hamley, and insisted on Molly's going to bed. When she pleaded the apparent necessity of her staying up, he said,—

"Now, Molly, look how much less trouble the dear old squire would give if he would obey orders. He is only adding to anxiety by indulging himself. One pardons everything to extreme grief, however. But you will have enough to do to occupy all your strength for days to come; and go to bed you must now. I only wish I saw my way as clearly through other things as I do to your nearest duty. I wish I'd never let Roger go wandering off; he'll wish it too, poor fellow! Did I tell you Cynthia is going off in hot haste to her uncle Kirkpatrick's. I suspect a visit to him will stand in lieu of going out to Russia as a governess."

"I am sure she was quite serious in wishing for that."

"Yes, yes! at the time. I've no doubt she thought she was sincere in intending to go. But the great thing was to get out of the unpleasantness of the present time and place; and uncle Kirkpatrick will do this as effectually, and more pleasantly, than a situation at Nishni-Novgorod in an ice-palace."

He had given Molly's thoughts a turn, which was what he wanted to do. Molly could not help remembering Mr. Henderson; and his offer, and all the consequent hints; and wondering, and wishing—what did she wish? or had she been falling asleep? Before she had quite ascertained this point she was asleep in reality.

After this, long days passed over in a monotonous round of care; for no one seemed to think of Molly's leaving the Hall during the woeful illness that befell Mrs. Osborne Hamley. It was not that her father allowed her to take much active part in the nursing; the squire gave him *carte-blanche*, and he engaged two efficient hospital nurses to watch over the unconscious Aimée; but Molly was needed to receive the finer directions as to her treatment and diet. It was not that she was wanted for the care of the little boy; the squire was too jealous of the child's exclusive love for that, and one of the housemaids was employed in the actual physical charge of him; but he needed some one to listen to his incontinence of language, both when his passionate regret for his dead son came uppermost, and also when he had discovered some extraordinary charm in that son's child; and again when he was oppressed with the uncertainty of Aimée's long-continued illness. Molly was not so good or so bewitching a listener to ordinary conversation as Cynthia; but where her heart was interested her sympathy was deep and unfailing. In this case she only wished that the squire could really feel that Aimée was not the encumbrance which he evidently considered her to be. Not that he would have acknowledged the fact, if it had been put before him in plain words. He fought against the dim consciousness of what was in his mind; he spoke repeatedly of patience when no one but himself was impatient; he would often say that when she grew better she must not be allowed to leave the Hall until she was perfectly strong, when no one was even contemplating the remotest chance of her leaving her child, excepting only himself. Molly once or twice asked her father if she might not speak to the squire, and represent the hardship of sending her away—the improbability that she would consent to quit her boy, and so on; but Mr. Gibson only replied,—

"Wait quietly. Time enough when nature and circumstance have had their chance, and have failed."

It was well that Molly was such a favourite with the old servants; for she had frequently to restrain and to control. To be sure, she had her father's authority to back her; and they were aware that where her own comfort, ease, or pleasure was concerned she never interfered, but submitted to their will. If the squire had known of the want of attendance to which she submitted with the most perfect meekness, as far as she herself was

the only sufferer, he would have gone into a towering rage. But Molly hardly thought of it, so anxious was she to do all she could for others and to remember the various charges which her father gave her in his daily visits. Perhaps he did not spare her enough; she was willing and uncomplaining; but one day after Mrs. Osborne Hamley had "taken the turn," as the nurses called it, when she was lying weak as a new-born baby, but with her faculties all restored, and her fever gone, when spring buds were blooming out, and spring birds sang merrily, Molly answered to her father's sudden questioning that she felt unaccountably weary; that her head ached heavily, and that she was aware of a sluggishness of thought which it required a painful effort to overcome.

"Don't go on," said Mr. Gibson, with a quick pang of anxiety, almost of remorse. "Lie down here—with your back to the light. I'll come back and see you before I go." And off he went in search of the squire. He had a good long walk before he came upon Mr. Hamley in a field of spring wheat, where the women were weeding, his little grandson holding to his finger in the intervals of short walks of inquiry into the dirtiest places, which was all his sturdy little limbs could manage.

"Well, Gibson, and how goes the patient? Better! I wish we could get her out of doors, such a fine day as it is. It would make her strong as soon as anything. I used to beg my poor lad to come out more. Maybe, I worried him; but the air is the finest thing for strengthening that I know of. Though, perhaps, she'll not thrive in English air as if she'd been born here; and she'll not be quite right till she gets back to her native place, wherever that is."

"I don't know. I begin to think we shall get her quite round here; and I don't know that she could be in a better place. But it is not about her. May I order the carriage for my Molly?" Mr. Gibson's voice sounded as if he was choking a little as he said these last words.

"To be sure," said the squire, setting the child down. He had been holding him in his arms the last few minutes; but now he wanted all his eyes to look into Mr. Gibson's face. "I say," said he, catching hold of Mr. Gibson's arm, "what's the matter, man? Don't twitch up your face like that, but speak!"

"Nothing's the matter," said Mr. Gibson, hastily. "Only I want her at home, under my own eye;" and he turned away to go to the house. But the squire left his field and his weeders, and kept at Mr. Gibson's side. He wanted to speak, but his heart was so full he did not know what to say. "I say, Gibson," he got out at last, "your Molly is liker a child of mine than a stranger; and I reckon we've all on us been coming too hard upon her. You don't think there's much amiss, do you?"

"How can I tell?" said Mr. Gibson, almost savagely. But any hastiness of temper was instinctively understood by the squire; and he was not offended, though he did not speak again till they reached the house. Then he went to order the carriage, and stood by sorrowful enough while the horses were being put in. He felt as if he should not know what to

do without Molly; he had never known her value, he thought, till now. But he kept silence on this view of the case; which was a praiseworthy effort on the part of one who usually let by-standers see and hear as much of his passing feelings as if he had had a window in his breast. He stood by while Mr. Gibson helped the faintly-smiling, tearful Molly into the carriage. Then the squire mounted on the step and kissed her hand; but when he tried to thank her and bless her, he broke down; and as soon as he was once more safely on the ground Mr. Gibson cried out to the coachman to drive on. And so Molly left Hamley Hall. From time to time her father rode up to the window, and made some little cheerful and apparently careless remark. When they came within two miles of Hollingford he put spurs to his horse, and rode briskly past the carriage windows, kissing his hand to the occupant as he did so. He went on to prepare her home for Molly: when she arrived Mrs. Gibson was ready to greet her. Mr. Gibson had given one or two of his bright, imperative orders, and Mrs. Gibson was feeling rather lonely without either of her two dear girls at home, as she phrased it, to herself as well as to others.

"Why, my sweet Molly, this is an unexpected pleasure. Only this morning I said to papa, 'When do you think we shall see our Molly back?' He did not say much—he never does, you know; but I am sure he thought directly of giving me this surprise, this pleasure. You're looking a little—what shall I call it? I remember such a pretty line of poetry, 'Oh, call her fair, not pale!' so we'll call you fair."

"You'd better not call her anything, but let her get to her own room and have a good rest as soon as possible. Haven't you got a trashy novel or two in the house? That's the literature to send her to sleep."

He did not leave her till he had seen her laid on a sofa in a darkened room, with some slight pretence of reading in her hand. Then he came away, leading his wife, who turned round at the door to kiss her hand to Molly, and make a little face of unwillingness to be dragged away.

"Now, Hyacinth," said he, as he took his wife into the drawing-room, "she will need much care. She has been overworked, and I've been a fool. That's all. We must keep her from all worry and care,—but I won't answer for it that she'll not have an illness, for all that!"

"Poor thing! she does look worn out. She is something like me, her feelings are too much for her. But now she is come home she shall find us as cheerful as possible. I can answer for myself; and you really must brighten up your doleful face, my dear—nothing so bad for invalids as the appearance of depression in those around them. I have had such a pleasant letter from Cynthia to-day. Uncle Kirkpatrick really seems to make so much of her, he treats her just like a daughter; he has given her a ticket to the Concerts of Ancient Music; and Mr. Henderson has been to call on her, in spite of all that has gone before."

For an instant, Mr. Gibson thought that it was easy enough for his wife to be cheerful, with the pleasant thoughts and evident anticipations she had in her mind, but a little more difficult for him to put off his

doleful looks while his own child lay in a state of suffering and illness which might be the precursor of a still worse malady. But he was always a man for immediate action as soon as he had resolved on the course to be taken; and he knew that "some must watch, while some must sleep; so runs the world away."

The illness which he apprehended came upon Molly; not violently or acutely, so that there was any immediate danger to be dreaded; but making a long pull upon her strength, which seemed to lessen day by day, until at last her father feared that she might become a permanent invalid. There was nothing very decided or alarming to tell Cynthia, and Mrs. Gibson kept the dark side from her in her letters. "Molly was feeling the spring weather;" or "Molly had been a good deal overdone with her stay at the Hall, and was resting;" such little sentences told nothing of Molly's real state. But then, as Mrs. Gibson said to herself, it would be a pity to disturb Cynthia's pleasure by telling her much about Molly; indeed there was not much to tell, one day was so like another. But it so happened that Lady Harriet, who came whenever she could to sit awhile with Molly, at first against Mrs. Gibson's will, and afterwards with her full consent,—for reasons of her own, Lady Harriet wrote a letter to Cynthia, to which she was urged by Mrs. Gibson. It fell out in this manner:—One day, when Lady Harriet was sitting in the drawing-room for a few minutes after she had been with Molly, she said,—

"Really, Clara, I spend so much time in your house that I am going to establish a work-basket here. Mary has infected me with her notability, and I am going to work mamma a footstool. It is to be a surprise; and so if I do it here she will know nothing about it. Only I cannot match the gold beads I want for the pansies in this dear little town; and Hollingford, who could send me down stars and planets if I asked him, I make no doubt, could no more match beads than——"

"My dear Lady Harriet! you forget Cynthia! Think what a pleasure it would be to her to do anything for you."

"Would it? Then she shall have plenty of it; but, mind, it is you who have answered for her. She shall get me some wool too; how good I am to confer so much pleasure on a fellow-creature. But seriously, do you think I might write and give her a few commissions? Neither Agnes nor Mary are in town——"

"I am sure she would be delighted," said Mrs. Gibson, who also took into consideration the reflection of aristocratic honour that would fall upon Cynthia if she had a letter from a Lady Harriet while at Mr. Kirkpatrick's. So she gave the address, and Lady Harriet wrote. All the first part of the letter was taken up with apology and commissions; but then, never doubting but that Cynthia was aware of Molly's state, she went on to say—

"I saw Molly this morning. Twice I have been forbidden admittance, as she was too ill to see any one out of her own family. I wish we could

begin to perceive a change for the better ; but she looks more fading every time, and I fear Mr. Gibson considers it a very anxious case."

The day but one after this letter was despatched, Cynthia walked into the drawing-room at home with as much apparent composure as if she had left it not an hour before. Mrs. Gibson was dozing, but believing herself to be reading; she had been with Molly the greater part of the morning, and now after her lunch, and the invalid's pretence of early dinner, she considered herself entitled to some repose. She started up as Cynthia came in.

"Cynthia! Dear child, where have you come from? Why in the world have you come? My poor nerves! My heart is quite fluttering; but, to be sure, it's no wonder with all this anxiety I have to undergo. Why have you come back?"

"Because of the anxiety you speak of, mamma. I never knew,—you never told me how ill Molly was."

"Nonsense. I beg your pardon, my dear, but it's really nonsense. Molly's illness is only nervous, Mr. Gibson says. A nervous fever; but you must remember nerves are mere fancy, and she's getting better." Such a pity for you to have left your uncle's. Who told you about Molly?"

"Lady Harriet. She wrote about some wool——"

"I know,—I know. But you might have known she always exaggerates things. Not but what I have been almost worn out with nursing. Perhaps after all it is a very good thing you have come, my dear; and now you shall come down into the dining-room and have some lunch, and tell me all the Hyde Park Street news—into my room,—don't go into yours yet—Molly is so sensitive to noise!"

While Cynthia ate her lunch, Mrs. Gibson went on questioning. "And your aunt, how is her cold? And Helen, quite strong again? Margaretta as pretty as ever? The boys are at Harrow, I suppose? And my old favourite, Mr. Henderson?" She could not manage to slip in this last inquiry naturally; in spite of herself there was a change of tone, an accent of eagerness. Cynthia did not reply on the instant; she poured herself out some water with great deliberation, and then said,—

"My aunt is quite well; Helen is as strong as she ever is, and Margaretta very pretty. The boys are at Harrow, and I conclude that Mr. Henderson is enjoying his usual health, for he was to dine at my uncle's to-day."

"Take care, Cynthia. Look how you are cutting that gooseberry tart," said Mrs. Gibson, with sharp annoyance; not provoked by Cynthia's present action, although it gave excuse for a little vent of temper. "I can't think how you could come off in this sudden kind of way; I am sure it must have annoyed your uncle and aunt. I daresay they'll never ask you again."

"On the contrary, I am to go back there as soon as ever I can be easy to leave Molly."

"'Easy to leave Molly.' Now that really is nonsense, and rather uncomplimentary to me, I must say : nursing her as I have been doing, daily, and almost nightly ; for I have been wakened times out of number by Mr. Gibson getting up, and going to see if she had had her medicine properly."

"I am afraid she has been very ill ?" asked Cynthia.

"Yes, she has, in one way ; but not in another. It was what I call more a tedious, than an interesting illness. There was no immediate danger, but she lay much in the same state from day to day."

"I wish I had known !" sighed Cynthia. "Do you think I might go and see her now ?"

"I'll go and prepare her. You'll find her a good deal better than she has been. Ah ! here's Mr. Gibson !" He came into the dining-room, hearing voices. Cynthia thought that he looked much older.

"You here !" said he, coming forward to shake hands. "Why, how did you come ?"

"By the 'Umpire.' I never knew Molly had been so ill, or I would have come directly." Her eyes were full of tears. Mr. Gibson was touched ; he shook her hand again, and murmured, "You're a good girl, Cynthia."

"She's heard one of dear Lady Harriet's exaggerated accounts," said Mrs. Gibson, "and come straight off. I tell her it's very foolish, for Molly is a great deal better now."

"Very foolish," said Mr. Gibson, echoing his wife's words, but smiling at Cynthia. "But sometimes one likes foolish people for their folly, better than wise people for their wisdom."

"I am afraid folly always annoys me," said his wife. "However, Cynthia is here, and what is done, is done."

"Very true, my dear. And now I'll run up and see my little girl, and tell her the good news. You'd better follow me in a couple of minutes." This to Cynthia.

Molly's delight at seeing her showed itself first in a few happy tears ; and then in soft caresses and inarticulate sounds of love. Once or twice she began, "It is such a pleasure," and there she stopped short. But the eloquence of these five words sank deep into Cynthia's heart. She had returned just at the right time, when Molly wanted the gentle fillip of the society of a fresh and yet a familiar person. Cynthia's tact made her talkative or silent, gay or grave, as the varying humour of Molly required. She listened, too, with the semblance, if not the reality, of unwearied interest, to Molly's continual recurrence to all the time of distress and sorrow at Hamley Hall, and to the scenes which had then so deeply impressed themselves upon her susceptible nature. Cynthia instinctively knew that the repetition of all these painful recollections would ease the oppressed memory, which refused to dwell on anything but what had occurred at a time of feverish disturbance of health. So she never interrupted Molly, as Mrs. Gibson had so

frequently done, with—"You told me all that before, my dear. Let us talk of something else;" or, "Really I cannot allow you to be always dwelling on painful thoughts. Try and be a little more cheerful. Youth is gay. You are young, and therefore you ought to be gay. That is put in a famous form of speech; I forget exactly what it is called."

So Molly's health and spirits improved rapidly after Cynthia's return; and although she was likely to retain many of her invalid habits during the summer, she was able to take drives, and enjoy the fine weather; it was only her as yet tender spirits that required a little management. All the Hollingsford people forgot that they had ever thought of her except as the darling of the town; and each in his or her way showed kind interest in her father's child. Miss Browning and Miss Phoebe considered it quite a privilege that they were allowed to see her a fortnight or three weeks before any one else; Mrs. Goodenough, spectacles on nose, stirred dainty messes in a silver saucepan for Molly's benefit; the Towers sent books and forced fruit, and new caricatures, and strange and delicate poultry; humble patients of "the doctor," as Mr. Gibson was usually termed, left the earliest cauliflowers they could grow in their cottage gardens, with "their duty for Miss."

And last of all, though strongest in regard, most piteously eager in interest, came Squire Hamley himself. When she was at the worst, he rode over every day to hear the smallest detail, facing even Mrs. Gibson (his abomination) if her husband was not at home, to ask and hear, and ask and hear, till the tears were unconsciously stealing down his cheeks. Every resource of his heart, or his house, or his lands was searched and tried, if it could bring a moment's pleasure to her; and whatever it might be that came from him, at her very worst time, it brought out a dim smile upon her face.

Making Merry.

WE were all upon the terrace one morning, in front of the old château. The *déjeuner* was just over, the sunshine had not reached us yet, and we were sitting under the old grey towers, watching a river, and some wooded slopes, all changing in the morning light. This September sunshine had turned the whole country to gold and lovely red and russet. The rising grounds upon which the old towers stand, the valley, the far-away hills, were painted and chequered and shaded with bright crisp autumnal colour. The trees were like the trees in Aladdin's gardens, with gold pieces and jewels hanging from the branches, and sparkling in the brown turf.

The morning seemed to come to us across fields and villages, over the river which went shining and wending away beyond the arches of the bridge at Meulan into that dim and unknown country which seems to bound all that is most beautiful. M. de V. had lighted his cigar, the ladies were working, the gentlemen were making their plans for the day, and the turkey-cocks came ambling down the hill, to be fed by little Mary. "*Tiens, voilà ta St. Côme,*" said she, giving one of them a big piece of bread, with which it instantly scrambled off in a fluster, shaking all its red bags and tassels as it went. Winifred asked what was a "St. Côme." Madame de V. smiled, and said it was something that she must see. It was a *fête* at Meulan, beyond the bridge on the little island in the river, and they called the fairings "St. Cômes" in that part of the world. In the meantime the kind host was making arrangements for every one of us to be driven there and back in various open carriages, which were to be in waiting at the very moment at which each of us wished to go and to return. Some begged to go twice, others, less enthusiastic, said once would content them.

St. Côme was a martyr: it is his memory which is held sacred, and to which all these small altars are erected, with their offerings of ginger-bread, sugar-stick toys and crockery, bobbins, cotton, laces, and night-caps. Poppuns are fired off, a dentist with a drum comes all the way from Paris, the celebrated two-headed child arrives in its bottle of spirits-of-wine, pleasures succeed one another, and all this cheerful clatter, all the little flags, all the games and lotteries, which are going on, are to do the saint honour. He was, while in the flesh, a wise Arabian physician, who seems to have given his advice gratis, and to have practised in partnership with his brother, St. Damien. They were afterwards both martyred towards the close of the thirteenth century, but the 27th of September ever since has been consecrated to the memory of the good

St. Côme, and the inhabitants of Meulan and its surrounding villages have elected themselves his especial votaries.

All the carts from all the neighbourhood seemed to be jogging along the white dusty road which leads from V., with its white walls and vines and trellises, and glimpses of the river, to Meulan. The country carts were heaped up with delightful primitive-looking people, with kind smiling faces, and caps and satin-bows, and bran new blouses. In one jolting conveyance I noticed seven happy-looking girls, packed closely away, all in smart white caps, with satin ribbons, and loops and ruffles quite crisp and standing on end. They jogged on laughing, while the young men of the party walked along the road by their side. Other vehicles there were, with nice nutcracker old women in the old-fashioned cap and red cotton dress of the last century. They looked like people out of Noah's arks, like chimney ornaments, or water-colour sketches, or descriptions in books of travels. They danced fat white doll-babies, they held little girls upon their knees, tied up into pinafores, and with funny frill caps fitting close to their round little bullet heads. There were expectant little boys in, pinafores too, and old fellows in snuff-brown coats and wonderful waist-coats, with patterns like maps and leopard-skins. There were also donkeys, with tall wooden erections upon their backs, containing their mistresses, whose feet dangled into baskets.

All the people along the road came to their doors to see us go by, and presently we drove into the old-fashioned market-place, with the bridge spanning the river, and with the great town-hall, whose spire dominates the town, and strikes the hours. It was an abbey once, and stands on the hill: the town clusters round it: the narrow streets climb the hill-side, and wind corners and disappear. The river flows down below between glittering banks. Broad white roads lead to Vaux, to Poissy, and along them the carts come rolling through the dust.

We already begin to hear the distant booming of the fair, to the accompaniment of the screaming of a thousand pigs. If the old men had put one in mind of Shem, Ham, or Cham as he is called in France, and Japhet, it would seem as if all these animals had been emptied out of a gigantic Noah's ark into the market-place. They are lying about, on their backs, on their heads, on their fat sides, grunting, squalling, squeaking in the most distracting manner: whereas the little donkeys are quiet and well-behaved, and stand in rows under the cathedral walls waiting to be bought. There is such a noise and chatter and confusion that one scarcely knows at last which are pigs and which are old women; for they are all talking together, remonstrating violently, and tumbling about over one another in the straw. The little children stand at safe distances absorbed in the bargains which are going on. The poor little pigs are poked and pinched, and caught up by the leg and the ear, and flung anywhere and anyhow. They are small and lively, not horrible contemplative obesities like those one sees in England. Of all the interesting animals I remarked on this occasion, I will only particularize one little tortoiseshell

pig with brown and red spots, for I was struck by the wistful glances a pretty peasant-woman was directing towards it. "That is the one I should have liked!" she said with a sigh to a sympathizing friend; and indeed who has not a little tortoiseshell pig somewhere or other out of reach—unattainable? If the pretty peasant-woman were to obtain her little pig, she would pop it into one of those great earthenware pots that are being sold by the bridge—they are something the shape of Roman amphoræ, very gracefully designed and prettily ornamented—the pretty peasant-woman would then salt down the object of her desires, and eat it up by degrees during the winter.

But all this squeaking and moralizing is only a flourish of penny trumpets, as it were, at the opening of the entertainment. We all hurry across the bridge: country caps, blouses, babies, amiable papas dressed in white linen with their families, elegant mammas in the last Meulan fashions. Here is one street of stalls for the sale of gingerbread and gimcracks, with a cross-street for entertaining games and shows. The great time for the shows is at night; in the daytime we content ourselves with munching gingerbread and playing at *rouge et noir*. The fortunate may win seven dozen of macaroons stuck at equal distances upon dubious sheets of white paper, with very little trouble, or exchange them for elegant chimney-ornaments, or water-colour sketches of dragoons, and ladies, and roses. It is a pretty sight, blue sky overhead, shining and twinkling through the branches of the avenue; people singing, talking, and staring at the gingerbread, of which perhaps the most delicious sort is called *semelle* from its appetizing likeness to the sole of a shoe. The grand ladies from the town are walking up and down between the stalls, gracefully curtsying and dipping to each other. One *élégante* affects a blue Scotch cap with a tuft of blue ostrich feathers; all the ladies are neatly finished off with beautiful little frills, and many of them lean on the arms of gaitered husbands with broad-brimmed hats, evidently prepared to initiate their families into all the amusements of the show.

THE CELEBRATED TWO-HEADED CHILD invites us to enter and examine. He is represented alive and crowned with roses, and surrounded by an admiring throng. We are satisfied with the picture outside, for M. de V., who good-naturedly goes in to reconnoitre, assured us that the sight is not only revolting, but in a bottle. Next door, MADEMOISELLE RACHEL gives her interesting exhibition. Mademoiselle Rachel is a bright-eyed little bird, who hops out of a cage, and presents you with the card you selected at hazard from her master's well-worn pack. Her discrimination would be more extraordinary still if the cards in the pack were not *all* kings of spades; but Mademoiselle Rachel is unconscious of the deception: she hops from her little perch with a clear conscience, neatly digs up the card with her bill, and takes a single grain of millet from her keeper's hand, as a reward, before she goes back into her prison. She has a rival; it is like Andersen's fairy tale of the "Princess and the Potaherd." Mademoiselle Rachel is all very well in her way, but not to be compared to the wonderful singing-

bird out of the snuff-box, who is to be seen next door for twenty centimes, together with the port of Niagara, the sultan of Turkey and his favourite sultana, and Robert Houdin at home *en famille*. Here at least is no deception. The singing-bird comes out of its snuff-box, and squeaks and wags its tail, and wrings its own neck in the most alarming fashion. The sultan of Turkey carefully rolls his eyes with a repugnant stare, which now rests upon his favourite sultana, now upon the alarmed spectators. All the ladies of the harem squat muslin-legged upon cushions round about him. The favourite fans herself spasmodically; while in the next compartment Robert Houdin, in majestic robes of black velvet and a sugar-cone hat, is playing thimbleric, surrounded by his numerous family. One spectatrix of about six years old, who is not afraid of turkey-cocks, is yet not quite certain that she derives pleasure from the entertainment; for, besides the glance of the sultan's eye, and the magic flow of Houdin's mystic robes, the terrific waves of green calico in the port of Niagara have to be encountered. There are but three, but then they appear to be of enormous size and fury. A ship rests upon the crest of each one of them, and remains in that precarious position notwithstanding the stress of weather and the imminent dangers to which navigation must be exposed in that little-known part of the world.

The raging of the storm had not abated when we left the tent. As we escaped, we heard the exhibitor loudly calling upon the crowds outside to seize the auspicious moment, and not to forego their chance of admission. The mechanic has a rival opposite, who exhibits attractive sketches of all the celebrated crimes of the last fifty years; to judge from a hasty glance, murderers are invariably dressed in tights, top-boots, velvet caps, and elegantly floating feathers. This is a thing to be remembered, that such persons may be avoided in future. All this time the merry-go-rounds are twirling round and round, and we tear ourselves away from the dark exciting scenes of bloodshed to watch a little fat baby sitting quite happy and alone in its little flying carriage, a small ragged boy clinging to a horse, and some young amazons who cast triumphant glances in our direction; the organ strikes up a military tune, and away they all go flying, men, women, children, one after another in the race.

There is something very cheering and inspiring in all this. The people are lively, but not too loud; there is more vivacity, but more gentleness too, than there would be among our people at home. One's heart aches a little as one thinks of one's own fellow-countrymen, patient and dull, and strong and clumsy, and weary, not able to rest content with light passing interests, with half-happiness with small things, but hurrying up in wistful crowds with a violence of effort, an earnestness in their amusements even, that seems to carry them almost beyond bounds when they are once let free. One is always being told that nations are like individuals, and we all have to learn in our lives how to be happy with trifles, how to put away care in the passing sunshine of the moment, and to find pleasure even in the bright colours of a bubble.

If the sight was pretty in the daytime, it was prettier still at night. Madame de V. and her husband M. de V., Winifred and myself, left the old castle about nine o'clock. It was all lighted up, turret windows and arched gateways; and from outside we could see the elders of the party sitting in the gallery in their quiet lampshane. It was pleasant to hurry down through the rustling woods and dark avenues, with the crisp leaves under foot, and the great stars blazing over the wide country. At the foot of the steep ascent and the avenue are great iron gates where the carriage was standing. All along the road we passed dusky forms hastening in one direction. The moon looked as if it was going to fall into the river and be extinguished with a great splutter; the wain travelled over the hills, the familiar triangles and figures blazed and hung in the sky. When we reached the island we found other illuminations: bright little arcades of fire were shining among the dark trees, and reflected in the water; and all the little gambling booths were lighted up in a simple fashion with candle-ends.

These games of skill are not very complicated. One energetic little man's whole stock-in-trade was an india-rubber tube, a halfpenny, and a soup-plate. The object of the game was to try and knock the tube and the son together out of the soup-plate. He could do it, because he passed his life in practising his art; but none of the bystanders succeeded, and the professor always pocketed the halfpenny. Another less complicated game was throwing a ball through a round hole lighted up by a candle.

The lady to whom the establishment belonged counted up the failures and payments with great rapidity: "Un et deux et quatre font onze; et trois et deux font vingt-deux, et six et trois, trente-cinq," and so on with surprising aplomb and inaccuracy. Instead of scolding her, M. de V. good-naturedly nodded his head and said, "Allez toujours, madame, ne vous gênez pas;" at which madame herself begins to scold, and gets very red in the face, and vehement and angry. So we leave her to her arithmetic, and go on past the little brawling shops where customers are chaffering—(we saw one priest buying quantities of gingerbread)—and people with white caps and bright dark eyes keeping watch over their wares. Crockery twinkles, little gilt ornaments shine and flicker in abundance, lotteries whizz and whirl, some of the prizes are of the most remarkable description, but the trumpet calls and the rappel is sounded, and we all hasten with the crowd to the central Place, where some one is alternately discoursing and playing on the drum.

"Venez, venez, messieurs et dames, venez voir la JEUNE SAUVAGE, qui mange de la viande toute crue," roars the proprietor of the booth. She is a native of those distant countries where the inhabitants nourish themselves upon the unfortunate crews of the vessels which are wrecked upon their coast. This woman is in no way related to the man you beheld last year. He was dangerous and was destroyed by order of the Government. She can only speak her own language. Walk in, walk in, "et vous serez-*r-r-récompensés* de votre peine, je vous le promets."

So we walk in, much interested by the description, and behold the appalling spectacle of a being whose name appears to be Juana, gambading behind the bars of a dark cage, grinning at us, and gnashing its teeth. Its face is painted of the approved cannibal brown; it occasionally shakes a great black woolly wig, which fills us with horror.

"Abawaba!" Juana bounds with delight, recognizing the melodious language of her native isles; suddenly she stops, stares, with both hands eagerly outstretched. An extremely small and dirty-looking piece of meat is now produced out of the exhibitor's pocket. He carefully cuts off a minute portion with a pair of scissors. Juana glares at the delicious morsel, and then suddenly seizes it through the bars, and thrusts it into her mouth. "Ah, see how savage she is," says the man in the blouse. "Nous allons maintenant lui préparer de la salade à la mode de son pays." Some black-stuff is then set fire to with a candle, which also goes into Juana's mouth. It seems that in her country the savages instantly expectorate their nourishment; and Juana accordingly deposits hers in a corner of the cage, dancing with rapture the whole time.

A *demoiselle de vingt-deux ans* now comes forward. The "administration," as the exhibitor calls himself, selects M. de V. and requests him to weigh the little dwarf, and to observe that she does not exceed two feet in stature nor ten pounds avoirdupois in weight. He then announces that the young lady will dance a little waltz *sans musique*, upon which she instantly twirls rapidly round two or three times. Her friend then begs to remark that she depends entirely upon the generosity of the public, "*n'étant nullement payée par l'administration!*"

Poor little dwarf! There was something affecting in the small, melancholy company. The administration looked very pale and hungry. Juana's life in the cage must have been somewhat monotonous. It seemed a weary way of gaining a livelihood. One hopes, at least, that their daily bread was not only raw meat and such very uninviting salad.

A great booth had been erected next door. All the simple country-folks had been gazing with delight at the glare and the tinsel on the coats of the pages and actors. We went up with the crowd. "Quand on est marié on finit toujours par céder," one man cried, appealing to us, when his wife insisted upon taking a place he had objected to. A melancholy, well-bred actor, in red silk, with a quiet humourous manner, now came on before the curtain, and said things which made the audience laugh, but which it was impossible for our stranger ears to follow. Everything he said was witty, M. de V. told me; and all he did was well done. He had a quiet nonchalant way: he put one in mind of Marielle, in George Sand's charming *Théâtre de Nohant*, of Wilhelm Meister among the players. He would make his fortune if he were to come to England. The entertainment turned out to be *tableaux-vivants*, behind a gauze curtain, on a revolving stage. It put one in mind of the "Pilgrim's Progress" and the sights that Christian saw. There was the story of Cain and Abel; there was the history of Joan of Arc; and besides these

there were things which seemed so terrible to English eyes that I cannot write of them at length. And yet it is not so long ago since miracle-plays were performed. Every day we look unmoved upon pictures and paintings of sacred subjects; we listen to descriptions and allusions which seem to approach with far less effort, with far more familiarity, towards awful mysteries. To me there did not even seem any great want of reverence, though I was frightened and taken by surprise. They had chosen two of Rubens' well-known pictures for imitation; there was not a sound in the crowded booth when the curtain drew up for an instant, and then fell again almost immediately. The figures in this miracle-play were quite motionless. I have rarely seen nobler-looking people than the two chief performers. They enacted their parts with perfect gravity and harmony of sentiment. Both the man and the woman were tall, majestic, fair-haired, with a noble outline of form and feature, and a simpleness which was really grand and remarkable.

As Joan of Arc, this tall, straight, sorrowful-looking young woman, with all her fair hair falling about her shoulders, and her beautiful up-turned face, seemed the very personification of sweetness and valiance and misfortune.

It is only in Brittany that such noble types are found, our friends told us; but they also added, that though nothing could have been better and more decorous than the performance of these principal actors, yet before the curtain drew up, allusions were made which would have been far better avoided. Baroness Tauphœus has admirably described these miracle-plays in the Tyrol, which are looked upon in the light of religious ceremonies almost, and which must be less objectionable than these representations so near home. And yet, where no harm is intended, where none is understood, where, like children, the troops of simple country-folks come pouring in, quiet their laughter in a moment, say it is *la religion*, sit silent and hushed for a minute, until the curtain falls, and then pour out into the night, where the stars are shining, and the lamps flaring, and where, like children, they begin to laugh and talk again in the sudden glare and glitter—one cannot say how far all this is wrong or right. It does not strike one as it would in England, where feelings are more complex, faith less simple and unreasoning, and the natures of men more intricate and rough and dangerous to deal with.

The ball was a very pretty sight. There were quantities of lamps and festoons hanging round, a great boarded dancing-place, with an arched colonnade outside it for the spectators who walked about upon the dried turf. Then came an inner row of benches for the chaperons, who sat round like real ones at a London ball, only they were little old peasant-women in their tight white caps, with their little shawls pinned across their shoulders, and they were holding other little shawls for their daughters when they should return to them. The middle part was crowded with dancers. The musicians were scraping away from a flowery bower. It was a pretty, pleasant, funny sight: *glimades*, *galopades*, gam-

bades, like Juana's. Sometimes a good old couple would stand up and foot it with great intrepidity. One little wiry brown old woman with her husband in his high-shouldered coat, were hopping opposite to one another like a pair of lively old sparrows. As the night wears on, the excitement grows: the music plays faster and more gaily, the steps increase in rapidity, and they all seem to begin to skip, to bound, with immense sprightliness and variety. The ladies grin reprovingly at their partners, but the gentlemen's spirits only seem to leap like fire does when a little water is thrown upon it. There is one delightful little man with an immense tall partner, and a very tall hat with a curly rim; either of them would have seemed quite sufficient to weigh him down, but he is equal to the occasion. His evolutions and revolutions, his inflections and ascensions, and flights and inspirations, are something quite wonderful. Retreats, advances, salutations, clapping of hands,—one does not know which to admire. His lady joins in with great spirit. Their *vis-à-vis* try in vain to surpass them. The gay refrain of the waltz echoes, and the dancers seem to sway with the tune: the chaperons nod their heads, and look on with smiling approbation. At last the dance comes to an end, the young ladies return to their mammas, but carefully lift up their dresses before they sit down.

We see the little man with the tall hat walking off with his partner to treat her to gingerbread outside; they seem conscious of their triumph, and some of the lookers-on shake their heads, laughing as they march past. One or two ladies have the gift of the dance, and jerk with peculiar adeptness; but these are far less interesting and more sophisticated than the simple peasant-women delightedly jumping, and bobbing, and flouncing, or rolling like the friendly teetotums of one's youth. There is scarcely a pretty face in the whole room. They are "gentilles," that is the most that can be said for them. Their hair is smartly dressed, parted, and twisted up tight and spruce. Some of them have their petticoats neatly looped up over tidy brodequins,—quite different from the splay, web-shaped chaussure of the inhabitants of our native isles.

The lamps were beginning to go out and to splutter when we came away, only the stars seemed brighter than ever in the dark sky, and almost starting from their places. The moon had not set, and we climbed the hill and came out from the avenue of lime-trees and nut-trees into a great calm sea of moonshine rippling over the old towers and pointed roofs. It was late, and every one was gone to bed. Only one red lamp was left burning for us when we returned. But until the early morning I heard the carts rolling homeward with their weary, happy burdens, and the distant voices chaunting cheerily through the silence of the night. They rolled through the darkness to their peaceful villages all round in the valleys and among the hills; and this distant, odd, pleasant music only ceased with the dawn.

Provincial Medical Charities.

THE words taken as the title of this article represent an aggregate of interests that probably far surpasses in its vastness any conjectural estimate that our readers would be likely to form. Omitting the county of Middlesex from consideration, more than 750,000 of the sick poor are treated, year after year, in the provincial hospitals and dispensaries of England alone. The annual *Medical Directory* contains a list of these institutions, with the names of their physicians and surgeons, the number of their beds, and the sum-total of their patients for the previous year. In many respects this list is defective, and, by reason of its omissions, the information we have compiled from it must represent something less than the truth. It shows the existence, in England, of 292 provincial institutions for the relief of sickness. Of these, 156 make up a total of 10,933 beds, and are called hospitals or infirmaries; while the remaining 136 are without beds, and are called dispensaries. In each division there are institutions devoted to some special disease, or to the diseases of some particular organ; but the majority undertake to combat all the ailments from which humanity suffers, with occasional limitations against such as are contagious, or the direct results of personal vice, or are supposed, in the present state of knowledge, to be incurable. The patients are of three classes: in-patients, who occupy the beds, out-patients, who attend at stated times for medical examination and physic, and home-patients, who are visited at their own residences. As a rule, the first class is peculiar to the hospital or infirmary, the third class to the dispensary, and the second class is common to both, the dispensary attempting to compensate for its want of beds by employing its medical officers to attend the more serious illnesses at the homes of the sufferers. During the year 1863, the 10,933 beds were occupied by 81,972 persons, and the out-patients and home-patients amounted to no less than 686,658, making together a gross total of 768,630 cases.

To combat the enormous amount of disease which these figures represent, the institutions in question have the services of 1,411 physicians and surgeons, exclusive of paid officers, such as resident or house-surgeons and dispensers. Of the 1,411, however, only 1,135 are actually engaged in duty, the remaining 276 being "extraordinary," or "consulting" officials in addition to the working staff. In old and well-established hospitals and dispensaries, the consulting medical officers are usually men who have retired from the ordinary work, and who carry away into retirement a merely complimentary title. In new and struggling institutions the nominal office of consulting-surgeon is often conferred upon the

leading practitioner of the locality, as a recognition of his professional status, and in order to identify him with the undertaking, as well as to secure for it his powerful influence with his wealthier patients. In either case the essential characteristic of the office, the *conditio sine qua non*, the differential phenomenon that separates the "consulting," from the ordinary doctor, is simply this, that the former must never be consulted. If he be a consultant of the first kind, his junior colleagues have probably waited a long time for his retirement, and are eager to show how extremely well they can do without him. If he be nominated as a buttress to a new charity, his presence and his reputation of themselves sufficiently overshadow his younger brethren, who will seldom be ready to give any un-called-for admission of his superiority. We may, therefore, omit the 276 from our calculation, and may assign 1,185 medical men to the service of 768,630 patients, or one to about every 677 in the course of the year. To these figures we shall return hereafter, and we need only say at present that they somewhat understate the case. Many practitioners fill the office of surgeon or physician to more than one charity; and it is not very uncommon to find men who are thus attached to three or four, and who, in the foregoing calculation, have been counted three or four times over. If we assume the apparent total of physicians and surgeons to exceed the real total by 87, the correction will raise the average number of patients for each to 700, and this is probably not very far from the truth.

It is manifestly impossible to arrive at any certain information about the cost at which these patients are treated, and it is found that there are great differences between the expenditure per head in different institutions. Assuming that the maintenance of a bed costs 80*l.* per annum, and that the medicine for each out-patient costs three shillings, we arrive at a gross total of 430,938*l.* 1*s.* It would not be extravagant to estimate the total annual expenditure of all the institutions at 500,000*l.*

The government of a provincial hospital, as a rule, is vested in the hands of a limited number of gentlemen, of the class from which county magistrates are selected. The regulations differ in different localities, but they usually bring about very much the same result. A seat at the board-room table is in most cases a privilege reserved for persons who contribute largely in money; and is seldom taken except by those who possess leisure as well as wealth. The rich manufacturer, with his faculty for organisation and his business talents, with his power of selecting the best man for the work to be done, and with his instinctive dread of the failures that attend upon a job, gives his money liberally, but gives nothing more. His time is too valuable to be occupied in discussions with possibly impracticable colleagues. The thrifty habits and the plain common-sense of the tradesman require the passport of a larger donation than his modest guinea or half-guinea. The exclusion of these elements, continuing in operation for a certain time, converts the board-room into a temple sacred to caste. The members of the committee meet there none

but personal friends and relatives, and help each other to make everything smooth and pleasant. When vacancies occur in their body, they are filled up by some mysterious process of re-election, only fully understood by the initiated; or, if the vacancy be absolute, by the consideration that so-and-so would like to join, and that he is a man with whom the remaining members are accustomed to associate. A committee thus constituted is unassailable; and may fearlessly proceed to any extremity of blundering or of favouritism. Its members take high ground. They are gentlemen of fortune, and position, and good repute. They give their money and their time without stint. They wield, collectively, a vast amount of local power and influence. They can always make, and can often mar, the fortunes of a professional man or a tradesman. They can promote or hinder the aspirations of families seeking to be received into "society;" and they are apt to exert their power, without absolute conspiracy perhaps, and often without entire self-consciousness, against any who presume to criticize their doings. The hospital they have so long governed is the best, and the best managed, in the kingdom. The surgeons and physicians, who owe their triumph over opposing candidates to the good offices of the committee, are the best and wisest, the most learned and most skilful men in the profession. The matron, the chaplain, and the house-surgeon, are paragons. These positions are self-evident; they are plain verities, which must be perceived when stated, and which ought to be perceived intuitively. The man who questions them must be a fool, or something worse. It would be unsafe to trust him to feel a pulse, or to stop a tooth, or to draw a settlement. He would perhaps be argumentative, and it would be painful to meet him at a dinner-party. Under the influence of such feelings as these, it is evident that the committee will enjoy an immunity from criticism beyond even the ordinary privileges of a corporate body. English gentlemen will never so far abuse a trust committed to them as to establish a condition of things on behalf of which nothing can be said. And, for anything short of this, a hospital committee could only be assailed successfully under circumstances so peculiar that their occurrence would be little less than a prodigy.

The typical provincial hospital is always in debt. For reasons that will become apparent in the sequel, it is supported by the few, rather than by the many. It has invested property, and an uncertain annual income from subscriptions and small donations. If the revenue from all sources be 3,000*l.* per annum, the expenses will be 3,200*l.*, or thereabouts. Some claims stand over for a time, some are paid by the treasurer out of his own pocket, some are met by casual windfalls. But the arrears accumulate, and every now and then there is a great demonstration. The local magnates put their shoulders to the wheel. A fancy fair is held. A bishop preaches. The subscription list is enlarged, and perhaps the average standard of subscription raised. As a rule, the members of the committee come forward nobly. The local Radical paper has questioned

the wisdom of their administration : they scorn to answer its attacks otherwise than by liberal deeds. Their cheques not only wipe away the remnant of indebtedness, but leave a margin with which to commence a new wing. They feel, more than ever, that they pay for and support the hospital, and that they are entitled to do what they like with their own.

The medical staff of a provincial differs from that of a London hospital in many respects, and in none more conspicuously than in numerical weakness and in the titular equality of its members. In London, the ordinary arrangement is to have three physicians and three surgeons, three assistant-physicians, and three assistant-surgeons. Each of these gentlemen attends twice a week ; so that a physician and a surgeon, an assistant-physician and an assistant-surgeon, are to be met with daily. The physicians and surgeons attend to the in-patients, the assistants to the out-patients. Besides this general staff, there are special departments, each with its complement of officers. The obstetric physician, the ophthalmic, aural, and dental surgeons, with their assistants, are to be found in most well-managed institutions. And some of the most able men in the medical profession have filled for years, and fill at present, the assistant offices, waiting for time to bring them promotion, and discharging their arduous duties with unfailing energy, punctuality, and perseverance. A staff thus constituted is theoretically almost perfect, and works with admirable efficiency in practice. Among so large a number of officers, no individual can attain undue or undeserved pre-eminence. The younger men tread upon the heels of their seniors, and compel them to examine and to master the improvements of the day. The elder men restrain their juniors from hasty innovation, and temper the possible rashness of youth by the wisdom of experience. A common pride in their connection with a great institution forms a bond of union between them all. The students are well taught, the patients are well treated, opportunities for observation and research are well used ; and, with due allowance for human frailty, beneficence and skill go hand in hand, for the accomplishment of some of their greatest works.

In provincial hospitals, with only one or two exceptions, assistant medical officers are unknown ; and the treatment of the out-patients devolves, nominally, upon the same gentlemen who have charge of the wards. For a large provincial hospital a staff of two physicians and three surgeons may be taken as about the average. The county hospitals are usually of some antiquity, and date from a time when physicians and well-educated surgeons were comparatively few in number ; when apothecaries were unequal to even the smaller duties of surgery ; and when various impediments to locomotion hindered the arrival of out-patients from neighbouring towns and villages. In these days the duties of the hospital were light, and the men competent to discharge them were not numerous. Out of London, only a small staff could be obtained, and, generally speaking, only a small staff was required.

The progress of events has totally altered these conditions. Men abound who are fit to hold office as physicians or surgeons to a hospital; and patients come in shoals from all parts of every county. But the provincial hospital makes no adequate increase to its staff; and for this two principal reasons may be assigned.

In the first place, the office of physician or surgeon to a county hospital is usually a very valuable appointment, improving the social status and professional position of any man who may obtain it, and, indirectly, largely increasing his income. To this rule there are notable exceptions; but still the rule obtains. A limited number of persons, who divide certain advantages, have a very natural aversion to the addition of fresh members to their body. People easily convince themselves of the truth of what they wish to believe, and no one has a right to wonder when the existing staff of a hospital exclaims, with one voice, that more physicians and surgeons are "perfectly unnecessary."

Secondly, in country towns, there is an amount of personal rivalry among professional men which could not exist in London. In a comparatively small area of practice, it is not uncommon for medical feuds to spring out of the illnesses of individual patients, or out of the ill-judged gossip of their friends. In any town large enough to support a hospital, there will almost always be two or more distinct medical parties. Brown, Jones, and Robinson, let us say, are surgeons possessing a fair equality of skill and knowledge. Each of them possesses a special and enthusiastic clientèle, composed of persons who regard with contemptuous pity the infatuation that can trust health and life to either of the others. Brown has many advantages. He is sixty years old. A studious youth and a thoughtful manhood have thinned and whitened his hair. The wholesome labours and simple pleasures of his temperate and well-spent life have left his powers unimpaired; and time, that has ripened and matured his judgment, has not yet dimmed the keenness of his eye, blunted the sensitiveness of his touch, or shaken the steadiness of his hand. The death of some professional Nestor, who was practically superannuated by his private patients twenty years before, opens a vacancy at the county hospital. Brown, Jones, and Robinson are the candidates. The great claims of the first carry the day. His opponents, both rising men in the place, both just entering upon middle age, both sufficiently skilful and experienced to do justice to a hospital appointment, and to use its great opportunities to the advantage of the patients and of the public, are defeated. Brown is a hale man, likely to hold his new office for years, but far too busy with his practice to devote to it the time it requires. In London either Jones or Robinson would cheerfully act as his assistant-surgeon, would see his out-patients, and perform operations of emergency in his absence. In a country town this cannot be. They are his rivals in practice, profiting by his occasional absence from the place where he is wanted,—sometimes seeking to profit, perhaps, by his occasional errors of judgment. By certain persons they are even now consulted in preference

to him, and they think it would be a tacit confession of inferiority to hold an office ostensibly subordinate to that of a man whom they hope one day to supersede.

The practical result is, that the work of country hospitals is very indifferently done. The physicians and surgeons are frequently so much occupied with their private duties, that they are very irregular in their hospital attendance, and often pay only short and hurried visits. There being usually but few students, the irregularity is of little consequence as far as the wards are concerned; but the poor creatures huddled together in the out-patients' waiting room—ordered to attend at eleven in the morning, and not admitted to the doctor until half-past three in the afternoon, suffering from hunger, fatigue, overcrowding, and imperfect ventilation—had need to be much improved by treatment in order to compensate them for the injury certain to accrue from these unfavourable conditions. The shortness of time leads to a very hasty inspection of the patients. Those whose cases present, upon the surface, any features of marked professional interest, are reserved for further examination, or for the wards. The remainder are treated at haphazard, from some book of formulæ, in accordance with the first symptom they mention, and at the rate of three patients a minute. In the dispensary, the compound mixture of gentian, and the compound mixture of soda, the tonic mixture and the acid mixture, are kept ready prepared. In the examining room they are prescribed in rotation.

It often happens that the members of the medical staff do not even find time for this apparent or perfunctory discharge of their duties, and that the treatment of the out-patients devolves almost entirely upon the house-surgeon, whose position and qualifications have the next claim upon our attention. The house-surgeon to a county hospital is usually a student, who has just passed his examinations, and who seeks experience before engaging in practice on his own account. He is almost invariably of good habits and character, and usually represents the very best class of young practitioners. There are a few examples of men holding such an office for a long period, growing grey in the service of one institution, and gathering great stores of professional learning. But hospitals do not provide accommodation for families, and usually pay only a small stipend. A house-surgeon who desires to marry, or who has any pecuniary ambition, is forced to resign his post; and, under the influence of these and other motives, the tendency to change is so marked, that it is usual for a committee to make a contract with the house-surgeon for three years.

To see the out-patients is not, we believe, in any hospital a recognized part of the house-surgeon's duty; and his duties that are unquestionable are generally quite sufficient to fill up his time.

The value of "experience" in medical practice consists very greatly in the power that it confers to arrive rapidly at trustworthy conclusions about disease. A surgeon who begins his professional life by closely and carefully examining his patients at all points, and by building up his

opinions about them step by step, investigating everything, and taking nothing for granted, is gradually and surely acquiring the power of recognizing important symptoms at a glance, and, as it were, by intuition. A surgeon who jumps at conclusions when he is young, will not only fall into the most deplorable errors then, but will never be accurate when he is old. A typical house-surgeon, in order to see fifty or a hundred out-patients honestly, with benefit to them and to himself, ought to have ample time and undisturbed attention, and even then he ought to feel the strain upon his faculties to be considerable. If he be called upon in a hurry, when there are many other claims upon his time and thoughts, and when his chief object is to "get rid" of the people, his seeing them will be the most hollow of all shams as regards their illnesses, and will be a source of both moral and intellectual evil to himself. Moreover, whatever may be his qualifications, he cannot be called upon to do the duty of the medical staff without a distinct breach of what is, at least, an implied contract. Subscribers vote for a certain candidate as physician or surgeon, under the belief that the patients will have the benefit of his skill; and any physician or surgeon who is unable to fulfil this reasonable expectation ought either to ask for a diminution of his duties or to retire from them altogether.

The attention paid to patients in the wards is in many cases probably sufficient, because the house-surgeon could scarcely fail to notice any important symptoms that they might present, and would mention the results of his observations to the physician or surgeon on his rounds. We say *probably*, without affirming that the fact is so; because provincial hospitals are very close boroughs indeed, and the profession outside have very few opportunities of criticizing the doings within the walls. By "attention," we mean, of course, not kind and cheering words, or a sympathetic countenance and manner, matters which are highly valuable, and rarely, if ever, wanting, but the mental attention necessary in order to find out all that ails the patient. With reference to this we attach special importance to the office of the house-surgeon, to his residence among the sick, and to his frequent intercourse with them; because we believe that ninety per cent. of medical errors are due to haste and carelessness, rather than to any lack of knowledge. Certainly there are some provincial hospitals to whose medical officers we could fairly impute negligence, but never ignorance; and from which in-patients go forth "unrelieved," to yield a rich harvest of reputation, if of nothing else, to neighbouring practitioners, who will take the pains thoroughly to investigate their illnesses. We do not refer to what are called "fancy cases," to brilliant operations, or to patients selected for the display of new methods of treatment, but to the ordinary routine of in-patient disease.

In order to consider how far the sort of system we have sketched deviates from that which would appear to be most desirable, it is worth while to inquire what are the purposes that a hospital is intended to fulfil. We presume that they are mainly two—the cure of the indigent sick, and

the instruction of medical practitioners. The first is the primary, avowed, and evident object; and we need only say of it that it is not promoted by allowing the medical officers to undertake more work than they can thoroughly and honestly accomplish.

To say that a hospital is intended for the instruction of medical practitioners is to assert a proposition that is not self-evident, and that may fairly be disputed. People may say that they elect a physician or surgeon from a belief in his skill and knowledge; that he may exercise his art, not that he may learn it. But physicians and surgeons, worthy of the name, are always learning; and learn more readily the greater is the substratum of knowledge on which they build. The highest attainable professional qualifications which denote the fitness of their holder for hospital and consulting practice, may be obtained at five or six-and-twenty; an age at which all men have a great deal to learn. The common consent of society recognizes the claim of hospital officers to consultation practice, not on account of the merits that gained them their appointments, but on account of the "experience" that these appointments afford. People know that, in a hospital, cases of sickness are brought together under circumstances particularly favourable for studying the phenomena that they present; and they do not always know that the value of experience depends entirely upon the way in which it is used. When a man has held a hospital appointment for a certain time, that fact alone will almost always enable him to charge high fees, will extend his practice among the more wealthy classes, and will cause him to be called in as a second opinion. Practically, whatever hospitals are intended for, they are used to educate a superior class of practitioners for the service of the rich. It may be questioned whether they are used for this purpose in the best way, and whether their utility with regard to it might not be greatly extended.

If we put reputation and fees out of sight, and consider in what other way hospital duty is useful to the practitioner, the answer is very plain. It affords him an opportunity of constantly exercising his art; and this opportunity is really more valuable from its daily routine of small and common things, than from its occasional difficulties and emergencies. There are many things which it is highly desirable to do, but which cannot be done in private practice: things which would be troublesome or inconvenient to patients, and to which they would not submit without obvious necessity on their own account. A hospital physician or surgeon, for instance, may make it a practice to examine the chests of twenty out-patients at each visit, without reference to their having chest ailments or not. By doing so he will learn more about the natural breath sounds, and about all departures from them, and will gain a more perfect practical readiness and familiarity with the subject, in the course of a few months, than he would in years of private practice, by examining only those persons for whom such an examination was imperatively required. Again, the progress of science is constantly producing new methods or instruments of research, as the stethoscope in the last generation, the

ophthalmoscope, the laryngoscope, the endoscope, in the present. The hospital surgeon has opportunities of perfecting himself in the employment of these various means. As regards pure surgery, he has, in the frequent performance of minor operations, the best possible training of his eye and hand for major ones. In all labour there is profit; and the man who is constantly doing the small things of his calling, and doing them carefully and well, is quite certain to be successful with the great things, when these are required of him by events. On the contrary, the man who does small things carelessly and badly is simply acquiring bad and slovenly habits. No aggregate of ciphers will make a unit; and the surgeon who has treated 500 slight cases without attention or thought, is not thereby any better qualified (but rather worse) for treating one severe one.

We think it follows that the system now pursued in provincial hospitals would be greatly improved by appointing assistant medical officers in such numbers that their proportion of out-patients should never become burdensome to them, and should afford them the opportunities and advantages of hospital practice without the temptation (now almost the necessity) of leaving half of their people unexamined. We think that the principle stated might be carried a long way: so far, indeed, as this, that the strength of the staff should be determined less by the absolute needs of the institution than by the number of able and willing labourers available in the locality. There is no reason in the rule that limits the number of surgeons to a hospital to three, or to four, when its only practical effect is to exclude other men of equal skill and ability.

In our imaginary contest between Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Robinson, we assumed that the personal and professional claims of the successful candidate were distinctly superior to those of his opponents; or, in other words, that merit had fair play. This assumption would frequently be very wide of the truth.

Some years ago a vacancy was created at a county hospital by the decease of the octogenarian senior surgeon. The veteran's tenure of office had long been a scandal to the institution; and, not long before his death, while endeavouring, with dim eyes and shaking hands, to perform an important operation, he actually cut two fingers from the hand of an assistant. The vacant office was sought by a gentleman of very great ability, who chanced to be a Roman Catholic, and who was at variance with one of the surviving surgeons, whose partner he had formerly been. The last-mentioned surgeon was himself advanced in life, was well acquainted with most of the leading county families, and had a son, a young man, who had only recently completed his education as a *physician*. This juvenile and perfectly untried physician was brought forward as a candidate against a surgeon, much his senior, and in many respects his superior. The father exerted himself greatly, and promised that as soon as his son was elected, he would himself resign. In spite of his personal influence, the issue was still doubtful, and, as a last

electioneering resource, an appeal was made against the Roman Catholic to an ultra-Protestant party in the county. The cry of "No Popery!" carried the day, and, as soon as the young physician had been elected surgeon, his father reconsidered and abandoned his intention to resign. In a great hospital in a populous town, containing between forty and fifty medical practitioners, the surgical staff consisted of M. le Père, M. le Fils, and a valetudinarian. M. le Père had once been an able man, and was then, surgically speaking, a petrification. M. le Fils had still to reveal his powers and merits, both of which ultimately proved to be considerable. In spite of them, however, his father and himself were distanced in the race for practice by the defeated candidate for the surgery, who, notwithstanding his creed, went all over the county as a consultant and operator.

Years rolled on. The valetudinarian became unfit for his duties, and wished to resign. He also wished to sell his practice, and in this the hospital appointment was a very valuable element. There was a rule in force at the hospital, handed down from a remote time, which provided that no one could be a candidate for a surgery until he had lived and practised in the town for twelve months. The valetudinarian sold his practice, introduced his successor, Mr. —, and went abroad. But he would not make a vacancy at the hospital until his successor was eligible to compete, and for an entire year he did not resign his appointment. In his absence Messieurs Père et Fils divided his duty.

When at last he resigned, the surgeon formerly defeated by M. le Fils came forward as a candidate, in opposition to Mr. —. On this occasion merit and ability carried the day. A majority of the electors felt it to be absurd that a man of great professional distinction, and in very large practice, should be excluded from the hospital of his own town. This majority was only a narrow one, because the known wishes of the valetudinarian carried great weight, and because the personal character of Mr. —, who had formerly been house-surgeon, was such as to render him highly popular.

The contest being over, the supporters of Mr. — cast about for some means of consoling him under his disappointment. The three surgeons in actual possession, Messieurs Père et Fils, and the newly elected, were all likely to remain at their posts for many years. It was suggested that the hospital might have a fourth surgeon, and a general meeting was called to consider the proposition. There was no statement or suggestion that the hospital needed such an accession of strength (although it really did so very greatly), and the question was openly and avowedly treated as one purely personal to Mr. —, and as having no other bearing than as a way of putting him into office. The three surgeons met together, and offered a bargain to their proposed colleague. If he stood out for a turn of admission into the wards, and for a share of beds and operations, they would oppose the project tooth and nail. If he would do assistant's duty, with the empty title of surgeon, and would be content to go without

in-patients, they would support him. He accepted their terms, the office of fourth surgeon was instituted, and Mr. — was elected without opposition, and we believe, without any knowledge on the part of the committee or the subscribers of the way in which his duties were to be curtailed by the arrangement with his colleagues.

In thinking over such a history as this, the analogue to which may be found in many other counties, the first thing remarkable is the way in which the *public* character of the institution is ignored by all concerned. An influential clique of governors take no other view of the hospital than that it affords a means of doing a good turn to the family doctor. The medical officers appointed regard the place as their private property, to be held against all comers, and they perpetuate at the present day many of the abuses that flourished in London hospitals many years ago, and that were rooted up by the *Lancet*. Wherever situate, all hospitals ought to be freely open to medical practitioners. As a matter of fact, they are just as much and as little open as the private houses of the surgeons. To both, admission is accorded to some by invitation, and is entirely refused to others. It is a common practice to send out invitations to the neighbouring medical men to attend and witness operations. For this purpose a list is prepared by the house-surgeon, and is expurgated by each surgeon in turn. Each in turn erases the name of every one who has offended him; and the deadliest form of offence is found in any professional criticism, or in any suggestion for the improvement of the institution. Not long ago a surgeon advised the committee of a county hospital to open a special department for the treatment of eye disease, as is now usual in London, and to place an additional surgeon in charge of it. The members of the medical staff felt and spoke like the elderly owner of a suburban villa, who receives notice that a projected railway will carry off a corner of his conservatory. They met and dined, poured forth a libation and cursed the offender by their gods. They said that his suggestion was an impudent interference, and they assured the committee that nothing of the kind was "necessary;" resting their opinion on the ground that very few cases of eye disease came before them, and forgetting that the experience of the few who came might in itself be an ample explanation of the absence of the many who stayed away. The committee consisted of gentlemen who could go to London if their own eyes suffered, and who were, therefore, perfectly content with the existing arrangements.

The effect of the present state of things is that medical men, unless they have some unusual family or other influence, regard provincial hospitals with dislike and jealousy. They see in them institutions for exalting a few practitioners at the expense of the many, and they do not see that the few are selected in accordance with any principle that they can recognize or approve. Those among them who are ambitious, and who are excluded from the established hospitals, set on foot little starveling institutions of their own. The great majority are passive in the matter, except

so far as this, that they do not promote the interests of the hospital with their wealthy patients. On the contrary, they say, "There is a man on whom I am about to perform an operation. His home is a poor one, not at all adapted for the purpose, and his means are very small. In fact, he ought to be in a hospital, but I do not wish to lose the case, which presents many points of interest. I shall be glad if you will help him with money or nourishment." Such appeals as this are made every day, by men who are in every way entitled to hospital appointments, and who cannot get them. They are very liberally responded to, and, if the feeling of the profession were enlisted on the side of hospitals, by facilities for using them, a source of contributions would at once be opened up that at present is entirely closed. People would give, small sums or large, to the hospital recommended by their own medical attendant, when they do not care to support what is not brought so nearly home to them. It is certainly true in many places, if not in all, that the county hospital is chiefly maintained by the upper classes of society, and that the middle classes and tradespeople contribute little or nothing to its funds.

It may be objected by some that, if hospitals were thrown open to the medical profession, so that doing duty in them ceased to be a distinction, surgeons would not be found to undertake the work. At present, it may be said, a hospital appointment is the readiest road to a lucrative practice, and therefore men take upon themselves the burden for the sake of the gain. If any one who pleased, being sufficiently qualified, were admitted to a share of the duty, the present advantages would cease to follow.

To such an objection as this we do not attach the smallest weight. The surgeons who are qualified for every kind of hospital duty are now very numerous; and, generally speaking, earnestly desire opportunities of exercising their calling. They fully recognize that every citizen of a free country owes a certain debt of gratuitous service to the commonwealth, to be discharged in accordance with his gifts and opportunities. They are excused from much irksome public service on account of their profession, and they would not seek to evade a claim that the profession would legitimately bring. Moreover, a hospital appointment filled under criticism, and in which they were exposed to rivalry, would call out the powers of the strong far more than the present system can ever do; and at the same time it would afford no opportunity for an unwarrantable elevation of the weak. The men who undertook hospital work would find their own level, and would display upon a public stage their claims to the public confidence.

There is probably no hospital which would not afford sufficient out-patients for all the practitioners who were willing to take part in attending them; but it would often be necessary to restrict the number of those in charge of the beds. Where this was requisite, the several surgeons might exchange duties, or give place to others, at stated periods, in rotation. It is worthy of remark that some arrangement of this kind is carried out at Bradford in Yorkshire; and that in the so-called "cottage

hospitals" now springing up in various localities, the principle is fully admitted that "any medical man in the neighbourhood may send patients and attend them in the hospital."

In considering the case of any venerable abuse, it is often profitable to inquire what would be thought of the arrangement if, instead of being sanctified by usage, it were now proposed for the first time. Instead of the present system we urge that our provincial hospitals should be made really public and national institutions, in which the patients would receive the greatest attainable amount of attention and care, and from which medical men would derive the greatest possible advantage. At present, they do not accomplish nearly what their pecuniary resources would allow, on account of the unwise limitation of the number of their medical officers. In nearly every county town the hospital is in the hands of a small number of men, who, by reason of their appointments, affect to be superior to their brethren. The appointments are obtained by election, after a costly and humiliating canvass, often after a contest in which every kind of electioneering trick is practised, and in which family interest, religious creed or other considerations wholly foreign to the issue, are of equal, sometimes of far more weight than the possession of professional skill and the conscientious discharge of professional duty. The number of the staff thus selected is invariably below the real needs of the institution, with the result that the out-patient department is grievously neglected, and often handed over absolutely to the house-surgeon. The needs of the institution should, we think, be rather over than under-supplied. The medical profession, as a body, supports hospitals nobly. The profession, as a body, has a distinct right to all the advantages (of which experience is the chief) to be gained from them. We hold that every physician or surgeon who resides within a certain distance of a hospital, and who gives proof of skill and diligence in his calling, ought to be permitted to take his share of the work. The duties of a hospital might in this way be divided among a sufficient number of men to insure their proper performance; the profession would largely benefit by the wide distribution of the privileges now so jealously guarded by a few; the patients, by the greater amount of time and care bestowed upon them; and the public, by the power of selection among many men, to each of whom the advantages of hospital practice, and of hospital responsibility, had been afforded.

Costume and Character.

WE wear our costumes as we take our pleasures, sadly; the blackness of the burden, and the fashion in which we wear it, being in some sort the legacy which we have inherited from our Puritan ancestors. There was a time when brilliant and picturesque attire was regarded not only as the livery of Moab and the brand of a vessel of wrath, but as something the reverse of respectable, and the badge of a losing cause; while the sad-coloured garment represented power, dignity, and a good understanding with the Government. No wonder, then, that the latter for a season prevailed. We have long since departed from the spirit, and abandoned most of the customs which the Puritans bound around our neck, as a yoke too grievous to be borne; but we have preserved in dress a certain affectation of gravity and monotony in colour, as being still the mark of a well-regulated mind. In morning dress, indeed, some latitude is allowed, but rough material of uncouth cut, and a good deal of singularity and slovenliness in the mode of wearing it, are thought less reprehensible than any bright-coloured vestment, however tastefully and artistically fashioned, which is at once the symptom and proof of conceit and levity. But for evening dress we are still inexorable, and rigidly exact that *costume de deuil* which gives such a funereal aspect to our men on festive occasions. Many men, especially the young, would gladly head a revolution in these matters, were it not that, like true Britons, they would face death rather than ridicule. So in these days we sacrifice our secret aspirations on the altar of Momus, along with several other things which are of more value. But our young men not unnaturally devoted a good deal of time and thought to the form and colour of their rifle uniform, and arrayed themselves in it gladly, seeing that, if laughed at then, it must be in company; but for a long while the solitary rifleman might be seen hurrying down to join his corps, trying hard to look as though he did not hear the cries of the city Arabs, who pelted him with chaff as they do each other with dirt, ill at ease with himself until he mixed in the ranks of his own comrades. Some of the regiments essayed to introduce a uniform which should be at once striking and original, notably the Oxford Corps, and the members of it instantly became the butt of the press. Indeed, Englishmen have about them a certain *mauvaise honte*, which generally creates a disagreeable sensation of self-consciousness whenever they are decked in any costume which is not the ordinary and traditional one. The introduction of knickerbockers in every-day dress was eagerly seized on by young fellows whose legs were unexceptionable; but the fashion never became general, and it is now chiefly confined to the little

boys of idolizing mothers. The secret desire for a distinguished costume, and the impossibility of gratifying it in private life, is probably the reason why young men sometimes try to introduce it as a matter of professional etiquette. Assuming this to be true, the vagaries of some of our ultra Anglicans can be easily explained. Among the higher classes, where the men have wealth and leisure at their command, frequent and entire change of costume is simply a matter of course. The dress worn at court, in the hunting-field, or the moor, at the ball or dinner circle, the uniform which almost every country gentleman is entitled to wear as a yeomanry officer, or lord-lieutenant, all differ from each other *in toto*. And when they are all worn in their turn, a man feels at ease in any of them; and this confers at once a self-possession and sense of mastery as regards externals, exceedingly difficult for a person to acquire who suddenly finds himself for the first time in a novel dress, which may be either admirable or ridiculous accordingly as the world regards it.

The Puritan idea in abolishing gaily-coloured and distinctive costume was apparently that one man should be made to look as plain, sad, and depressed as another; our motive in perpetuating these traditions seems rather to be that every man may have the chance of being taken for something different to, or better than, what he is. The custom of men and women wearing a dress more or less picturesque, but always appropriate to and distinctive of their calling and condition, was one essentially antagonistic to snobbishness and undue pretension, and well calculated to engender and cherish an *esprit de corps* of a very valuable kind.* Once the "prentice lad" was known by his dress, and the master by his broad-cloth, the serving-man wore one garb, and the cavalier another; and if the tire-woman tried to imitate the dress of the nobly-born lady, she was laughed out of court by her own equals. But at present the maid desires to be taken for her mistress, the cook for the housekeeper, the valet for his master. The shop lad firmly believes that he is, when out for the Sunday, supposed to be a gentleman with means and leisure; and the commercial traveller wraps up his pack so that it may if possible resemble the knapsack of the ordinary traveller. Of servants in the present day, there is the least tendency to this form of snobbishness in the groom. In livery or out, in his Sunday dress or otherwise, he always looks like what he is. He may, and sometimes does, aim to be a swell groom, but never a swell; and when his incurable frailties are brought up against him, this merit now so rare should be remembered in his favour.

* The scholars of Christ's Hospital afford a good instance of what we mean. These boys elbow their way through the crowded streets of London like little men of the world, are perfectly at their ease under all circumstances, and acquire an early and intimate knowledge of men, manners, and business, which fits them above all other schoolboys to succeed in after-life. Their peculiar dress reminds them that they must support the honour of their school, and that certain detection follows abuse of their liberty. It confers on them at once recognition, protection, and responsibility. For these reasons there will be something to regret when the school is removed, and the dress no longer retained.

There are certain parts of Great Britain where particular costumes are still worn; but unless where they are looked on as a badge of nationality, as in Wales and the Highlands, or are found to be not only becoming but solidly advantageous as an advertisement of a calling, as with the Newhaven fishwives, the custom is obviously dying out. The spread of education, and the increased facility of communication, both work in this direction. A strongly individual type of character has come to be regarded as an eccentricity, to be tolerated, it is true, by a society that prides itself on its powers of toleration, but also to be compassionated, and when spoken of at all, to be incidentally defended as something harmlessly ridiculous, which deserves a passing notice—a picturesque anomaly existing but for the moment. With originality of character perishes also the racy metaphor and idiomatic sinewy mode of expression which once prevailed among us. This style De Quincey believes is now only to be found among our women and children, and those women of a kind uncommon in these days, well-educated, in the old-fashioned sense of the word, vigorous in body and mind, but unsophisticated, little travelled, and by no means given to books. Some of the courtly old Scotch ladies, of whom Lord Cockburn and Dean Ramsay tell tales, are good illustrations of the class. The quaint fashion of their dress accorded well with their terse full-flavoured speech. All this kind of thing is passing away; but as women are natural conservatives, it is with them that relics and memorabilia are to be searched for and found. The Newhaven fishermen and their wives are said to be of Belgian blood; they intermarry only with each other, and have customs among themselves quite as singular as those of the gipsies. When the time comes that these cease to be observed, it is probable that their costume will also disappear. As soon as the Newhaven fishwife longs to be taken for anything but what she is, no more will she be seen in her cap and striped petticoat.

Perhaps a great though unacknowledged pleasure of the Englishman abroad is the relief his eye experiences in beholding the picturesque and brilliant costumes which he may *there* admire without compromising his reputation for common-sense and orthodoxy. In the Champs Elysées are to be seen side by side the Normandy “bonne,” with her sparkling black eye and olive skin, her enormous cap of spotless linen *bien posé* on her head, gold earrings, short bright-coloured petticoats, buckled shoes, and inevitable red umbrella, with a Sister of Charity, her garments flowing to the ground in easy shaft-like folds. To the insular mind, *her* dress is for ever associated with Jesuits and the Inquisition. Our soldiers learned in the Crimea to regard them with other feelings, and with Continental nations they appear simply as the heralds of a benevolent and disinterested charity. There are monks in their brown or grey vestments, priests in their broad hats and long black robes, dozens of sous-officiers escorting gaily-attired soubrettes, grisettes, or what not. A few peasant-women from the provinces, a muleteer here and there from the Pyrenean districts in a half

Spanish dress, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs, each man in the picturesque garb of his own country, all contribute to make a dazzling variety very charming to a tired traveller. The ouvriers have latterly exhibited a disposition to renounce the blouse and aspire to wearing black clothes: no improvement as regards either comfort, economy, or appearance, if they only knew it. Sometimes the sight of this animated panorama will inspire an Englishman with an unhappy ambition to distinguish himself; so in his clumsy way he tries his hand at a costume. With this view he bids adieu to gloves and linen, and walks abroad in a billycock hat, flannel shirt, and otherwise dressed from head to foot in a suit of strawberry-cream-coloured woollens. The Breton costume is, we are told, almost a thing of the past, but in the Landes districts of Guyenne the peasants are still to be seen clad in sheepskins and very large coarse brown woollen caps, which give a certain *farouche* air. The Bournais women wear an exceedingly picturesque garment. It is in common parlance a bernous or short cloak of fine wool made in a large square. It is worn like a shawl, placed over the head instead of the shoulders, and is so fashioned that the front part folds back like a hood, and shelters or exposes the face at pleasure. Those for every-day wear are of scarlet, bordered round and crossed down the centre with broad black velvet; but for fête-days they are of white lama wool, of extreme fineness, and bordered with either black, scarlet, or blue velvet. A close-fitting brown or black embroidered jacket and short coloured petticoats complete the dress. It is, however, in the centre of Europe that costume becomes the rule rather than the exception. In Suabia, Bavaria, Silesia, Poland, and Hungary, it is as varied and picturesque as an artist's eye could desire to gaze on. In certain parts of Germany almost every village is distinguished by some special peculiarity in this matter; and, as may be supposed, the manners are quaint and old-fashioned in proportion, and the customs, many of them singular enough, have all the unchangeableness of the laws of the Medes, and are observed with the same devotion and strictness as if they were religious rites. It is maintained by people who have some reason for such an opinion, that the picturesque costumes of the peasantry date actually from the Roman colonies which were so numerous in the heart of Germany during the reign of Augustus. On this account the really costly and more characteristic dresses are not to be found in the Northern parts; or, at any rate, if they have ever been worn there, they have fallen into entire desuetude, and the country people there are busily following the fashion of the world, and strive to appropriate the dress and manners of the wealthier classes, with that feeble and partial success which usually attends such efforts. Nevertheless the dress of some of the Southern peasantry is so beautiful, that it is often worn at fancy balls by the Northerners; and more than one highly-born German Mädchen has been heard to wish that fate had made her a peasant-girl, in order that she might by prescriptive right and custom thus adorn herself. Innumerable as these costumes are in kind, they are all worn with a difference. In

Bavaria alone there are seven distinct varieties, the head-gear being perhaps the article in which there is the greatest dissimilarity, since the skirts, though of different texture and colours, must needs be of uniform make. In Bamberg a scarlet handkerchief is bound fantastically round the forehead, finished with a bold knot, the two ends standing out conspicuously on each side. This style is always worn by the fruit and vegetable women, Anglicé costermongers, who, like the *dames des Halles*, are a class apart, and possess a vocabulary of the choicest Billingsgate, and a well-earned reputation for tongues that can use it ; so that it is a saying, *so grob wie ein Bamberger Gemuseweib*, "as rude as a Bamberg fruit-woman." Towards Würzburg they comb up all their hair and mould it into one compact clump at the top of their heads, and on this they invert a kind of wine-funnel made of black felt. In Altenburg and Suabia the dress of the women at once challenges attention by reason of the extreme shortness of their petticoats, which do not by any means cover the knees, and are very full, and gathered and quilted like a Highlander's kilt. Ordinarily they are of very bright-hued stuff, spotted or particoloured, and are plaited so thickly round the hips that they fall in above the knees, and might easily at the first glance be taken for the stuffed short trunk hose of former days. Coarsely-knitted white stockings, low-cut shoes, with short tight-quilted black vest, and long chemise sleeves of every colour of the rainbow, complete the dress. A striped handkerchief fits close on to the head, and covers every scrap of hair, and from this depend behind broad tassels of embroidered cloth, or a thick long fringe like a curtain. The men wear real trunk hose, but it is only from a front view that they are to be distinguished from the petticoats of the women. They are made of woollen cloth of sombre colours for everyday wear, but of blue or scarlet velvet for a fête-day. The jacket is shaped like a postilion's, only longer—it is often decorated with a velvet collar and showy buttons; their legs are hidden in enormous long boots of yellow or dull red leather. About Würtemberg they wear long single-breasted scarlet waistcoats tightly buttoned, and either broad-brimmed or cocked felt hats, coats down to their heels lined with light blue or scarlet, and thrown back so as to display the braces, which are richly embroidered and worn over the waistcoat. Yellow breeches and blue or striped stockings, with buckled shoes, complete this costume. The women generally have black vests, cut low and square in front, with some brilliantly striped handkerchief over the bosom. The petticoats descend nearly as far as the ankles, and are purple, crimson, or blue, trimmed with divers colours; a small striped triangular handkerchief is tied over the head, or a kind of turban is worn, with a number of ends of ribbons of different hues floating from it. Sometimes the jacket is small and shaped like a Zouave's, and a vest of bright scarlet is shown with good effect. At Würtemberg, a bride is dressed very gorgeously. She may be seen in something resembling a smoking-cap of pale blue velvet richly embroidered with gold, and a bunch of blue ribbons hung down over each ear, and a white chemise with

long sleeves, a bodice of crimson slashed with blue and orange, and a white skirt displaying two under-petticoats, one of deep blue, the other of scarlet and orange. About Thuringia the peasant-girls hide every scrap of hair most carefully, and arrange a particoloured handkerchief on their heads, so as to resemble a sugar-loaf with the top cut off. One very pretty girl happened to possess a beautiful head of hair; it was not only long and abundant, but, what is not quite so common in these parts, fine and silky in texture. She was inspired by her evil genius to display her treasure, and was even bold enough to wear it in two long plaits which reached to the ground; but custom cannot there be defied with impunity any more than it can here. Those who lacked both courage and hair to enable them to follow her fashion, were loud in disapprobation. The poor girl was railled at and called *ein freches Mädchen*, a village flirt, and a bold and immodest maiden; finally she succumbed, her hair was again concealed from the gaze of the vulgar, and she quickly obtained a husband as the reward of her self-denial and docility. On a fête-day the daughters of the more wealthy peasant proprietors are attired literally regardless of expense; the crowns of their felt hats are almost covered with gold or silver embroidery, and depending from the back are a number of black silk ribbons reaching to the heels. They are expressly manufactured for the purpose, and are sometimes two spans in breadth—the length, breadth, and number of these ribbons, and the thickness and rich quality of the silk, being the gauge of the father's wealth. Round their necks they have chains or necklaces hung with heavy gold coins, so that their dowry and expectations can be ascertained with tolerable accuracy at a glance. Straw hats and bonnets are occasionally worn, the latter resembling in shape those which Quakeresses used to delight in, only much larger, and calculated to protect the face, not only from the glance of the sun, but of humanity. As we travel towards Silesia we meet with the close-fitting white caps, which, on Sunday, are clean and pretty enough, but on week-days assume various shades from tawny to black. Silesia is so close to Poland that the peasants speak little or no German, and approximate to the Poles in character. One point in particular they have in common; if they are conservative in costume they are no less conservative in the matter of dirt. Not long since a pretty peasant, the daughter of a *Nachtwächter*, or night-guard, who resided in one of these villages, was presented with a very superb costume as a New Year's gift. Apprehensive that her eldest sister would exercise the rights of primogeniture, and give her property an occasional airing, the damsel actually sewed herself up in it, and we regret to say, lived, worked, and slept in her dress until it dropped in rags off her person. It is in Silesia, and more especially on the banks of the Vistula, that we find people afflicted with the loathsome disease known as the Vistula plat. Every single hair exudes a gummy matter, which forms in a thick paste on the head. For their life they dare not cut it off: even when they snip a hair it is said to ooze blood, and no other remedy seems to be known except time. To attempt to part the hair causes

agonizing pain ; so the mass is suffered to remain until it forms into a dry crust, and then breaks off, and the hair with it. It is highly infectious, and though it is supposed to be generated by drinking the unwholesome waters of the Vistula, it is probable that dirt has a good deal to do with it. The women suffer from it even more than the men, which is not remarkable, since when they have once plaited and bound up their hair, days, weeks, and even months pass away before they think it necessary to release it.

In these districts the poorer families live as the Irish do, all in one room ; the social circle being supplemented with such pigs and poultry as they happen to possess. In the place where they eat, there they also sleep, the beds being piled up to such an enormous height with stuffing, feathers, and quilted coverlets, that a ladder is required in order to get into them. Some sleep upon the stove, especially in winter ; others crouch round it. To provide the needful material for their monstrous beds, the geese are continually half-plucked while they are alive, and almost entirely denuded before they are sent to market, to be sold, slain, and eaten. The down or feathers are often very imperfectly cleansed, and when they are made into beds, which are rarely shaken, and perpetually slept in, the rank odours and offensive unwholesome atmosphere may hardly be described or endured. The peasants work all day in the fields, men and women alike, during the summer ; in winter, of course, the hours of labour are shorter, and in the long evenings both sexes amuse themselves with the spinning-wheel. They assemble at each house in turn, and a good deal of emulation is excited, so that if a peasant slips or breaks his thread only once in the evening, he is laughed at and called *ein Dummkopf*—a clumsy fellow. While thus industriously employed they sing, either in parts or in chorus, and as they have generally a fair knowledge of music and excellent voices, they perform exceedingly well, though not of course in a very finished style. Where music is being performed, a little crowd will assemble before the house and stand there for many hours unweariedly, and to use their own expression, "when the music ceases it is like breaking their hearts." ~~As~~ With all unlearned and isolated people, their superstition and credulity are mingled with a great deal of timidity and distrust. They are exceedingly careful of their money, almost to penuriousness, and the youngest child can reckon pretty accurately, even according to the complicated ~~method~~ ^{method} which the coinage renders necessary. But the peasants have to a ~~man~~ ^{man} a deep-rooted suspicion of the townspeople and their principles, and after doing business with them the change is generally reckoned up in half-a-dozen different ways, or more. First, they count it in *batsen*, of which twelve go to a florin, then by six-kreutzer pieces, of which ten go to a florin, then by good, or Austrian florins, each of which is worth 24, then by common florins, value 15. 8d. each ; then by *thaler*, of which each is worth one and three-quarters of the common florin, then by *groschen*, value two florins and forty-two kreutzers ; by *species thaler*, value two florins and fifteen kreutzers ;

and as in these parts very antiquated coin are often found hoarded up, they will also reckon by some such old-fashioned money as the *kopfstücke*, now hardly ever seen, but which is equal to four six-kreutzer pieces. If the change is found to be correct after being submitted to these various tests, then and not before, is the peasant mind satisfied. A little country lad was sent into a neighbouring town provided with a six-kreutzer piece. With three kreutzers he was to pay at the post office for a letter, of which he was the bearer, and with the other three he was to buy his dinner; i. e. a two-kreutzer sausage and a kreutzer roll. He imprudently resolved to dine first, and thus found himself exposed, amidst the persuasions of hunger, to the bewildering temptations which a sausage-shop offers to a German stomach. For the varieties are so numerous. There is the *blut* sausage, black, and in form short and thick—the name indicates its principal ingredient; the Vienna sausage, bright red, small, and thin; the garlic sausage, unfragrant and of a dull red brown; the mixed white sausage; the *knack* sausage, mottled, and very hard and crisp; the truffle sausage, dark grey, and short and thick; the *cerveat* sausage, composed of brains, red and white in colour; the two last are regarded as dainties, and are eaten in thin slices. The most common and popular is the *brat*, or roast sausage, which is sold hot with bread. The Duchess of Coburg has been known to repair, accompanied by her ladies-in-waiting, to the market-place at Coburg, there to partake of this savoury condiment. Whichever of these was chosen by the little boy, exceeded the sum allotted for his dinner by one kreutzer, and when he presented himself at the post-office he had but two kreutzers left. The clerk, like all officials, was obdurate, the deficiency must be made good, or there was no posting the letter that day. The poor child, after a long pause, during which he endured all the pangs of an accusing conscience, and experienced that sorrow which is rather for the detection than for the sin, made up his mind to an enormous sacrifice. Holding up the unfinished half of his sausage to the man's face,—“Da, beisst für einen Kreutzer ab, so wird's recht sein.” “Here,” he said, “bite a kreutzer-worth off, so will it be all made right.”

These poor people, as primitive and homely in their manners as they are conservative in custom and costume, are likewise contented, happy, and tranquil. When their simplicity departs, it is probable that their contentment and their peasant costumes will also become things of the past. Perhaps the time will come when we shall all dress alike, talk alike, and think alike, except on religion, which is destined to be the battle-field for the human race in every age, past, present, and future.

Annals.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHE COMES BETWEEN THEM.



POINTED hours for the various domestic events of the day were things unknown at Thorpe-Ambrose. Irregular in all his habits, Allan accommodated himself to no stated times (with the solitary exception of dinner-time) at any hour of the day or night. He retired to rest early or late, and he rose early or late, exactly as he felt inclined. The servants were forbidden to call him; and Mrs. Gripper was accustomed to improvise the breakfast as she best might, from the time when the kitchen fire was first lighted, to the time when the clock stood on the stroke of noon.

Towards nine o'clock on the morning after his return, Midwinter knocked at Allan's door; and, on entering the room, found that morning before the man who usually attended on him was up, and that his hot water had been brought to the door by one of the housemaids, who was then still in ignorance of Midwinter's return. Nobody had chanced to see the master, either on the stairs or in the hall; nobody had heard him ring the bell for breakfast as usual. In brief, not any knew anything about him, except what was obviously clear to all—that he was not in the house.

Midwinter went out under the great portico. He stood at the head of the flight of steps considering in which direction he should set forth to look for his friend. Allan's unexpected absence added one more to



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the disquieting influences which still perplexed his mind. He was in the mood in which trifles irritate a man, and fancies are all-powerful to exalt or depress his spirits.

The sky was cloudy; and the wind blew in puffs from the south—there was every prospect, to weather-wise eyes, of coming rain. While Midwinter was still hesitating, one of the grooms passed him on the drive below. The man proved, on being questioned, to be better informed about his master's movements than the servants indoors. He had seen Allan pass the stables more than an hour since, going out by the back way into the park, with a nosegay in his hand.

A nosegay in his hand? The nosegay hung incomprehensibly on Midwinter's mind as he walked round, on the chance of meeting Allan, to the back of the house. "What does the nosegay mean?" he asked himself with an unintelligible sense of irritation, and a petulant kick at a stone that stood in his way.

It meant that Allan had been following his impulses as usual. The one pleasant impression left on his mind after his interview with Pedgift Senior, was the impression made by the lawyer's account of his conversation with Neelie in the park. The anxiety that he should not misjudge her, which the major's daughter had so earnestly expressed, placed her before Allan's eyes, in an irresistibly attractive character—the character of the one person among all his neighbours who had some respect still left for his good opinion. Acutely sensible of his social isolation, now that there was no Midwinter to keep him company in the empty house; hungering and thirsting in his solitude for a kind word and a friendly look, he began to think more and more regretfully and more and more longingly of the bright young face, so pleasantly associated with his first happiest days at Thorpe-Ambrose. To be conscious of such a feeling as this, was, with a character like Allan's, to act on it headlong, lead him where it might. He had gone out on the previous morning to look for Neelie with a peace-offering of flowers, but with no very distinct idea of what he should say to her if they met; and failing to find her on the scene of her customary walks, he had characteristically persisted the next morning in making a second attempt with another peace-offering on a larger scale. Still ignorant of his friend's return, he was now at some distance from the house, searching the park in a direction which he had not tried yet.

After walking out a few hundred yards beyond the stables, and failing to discover any signs of Allan, Midwinter retraced his steps, and waited for his friend's return, pacing slowly to and fro the little strip of garden ground at the back of the house.

From time to time, as he passed it, he looked absently at the room which had formerly been Mrs. Armadale's, which was now (through his interposition) habitually occupied by her still—the room with the Statuette on the bracket, and the French windows opening to the garden, which had once recalled to him the Second Vision of the Dream. The Shadow

of the Man, which Allan had seen standing opposite to him at the long window; the view over a lawn and flower-garden; the pattering of the rain against the glass; the stretching out of the Shadow's arm, and the fall of the statue in fragments on the floor—these objects and events of the visionary scene, so vividly present to his memory once, were all superseded by later remembrances now, were all left to fade as they might in the dim background of time. He could pass the room again and again, alone and anxious, and never once think of the boat drifting away in the moonlight, and the night's imprisonment on the Wrecked Ship!

Towards ten o'clock the well-remembered sound of Allan's voice became suddenly audible in the direction of the stables. In a moment more, he was visible from the garden. His second morning's search for Neelie had ended to all appearance in a second defeat of his object. The nosegay was still in his hand; and he was resignedly making a present of it to one of the coachman's children.

Midwinter impulsively took a step forward towards the stables, and abruptly checked his further progress. Conscious that his position towards his friend was altered already in relation to Miss Gwilt, the first sight of Allan filled his mind with a sudden distrust of the governess's influence over him, which was almost a distrust of himself. He knew that he had set forth from the moors on his return to Thorpe-Ambrose with the resolution of acknowledging the passion that had mastered him, and of insisting, if necessary, on a second and a longer absence in the interests of the sacrifice which he was bent on making to the happiness of his friend. What had become of that resolution now? The discovery of Miss Gwilt's altered position, and the declaration that she had voluntarily made of her indifference to Allan, had scattered it to the winds. The first words with which he would have met his friend, if nothing had happened to him on the homeward way, were words already dismissed from his lips. He drew back as he felt it, and struggled with an instinctive loyalty towards Allan, to free himself at the last moment from the influence of Miss Gwilt.

Having disposed of his useless nosegay, Allan passed on into the garden, and the instant he entered it, recognized Midwinter with a loud cry of surprise and delight.

"Am I awake, or dreaming?" he exclaimed, seizing his friend excitably by both hands. "You dear old Midwinter, have you sprung up out of the ground, or have you dropped from the clouds?"

It was not till Midwinter had explained the mystery of his unexpected appearance in every particular, that Allan could be prevailed on to say a word about himself. When he did speak, he shook his head ruefully, and subdued the hearty loudness of his voice, with a preliminary look round to see if the servants were within hearing.

"I've learnt to be cautious since you went away and left me," said Allan. "My dear fellow, you haven't the least notion what things have happened, and what an awful strape I'm in at this very moment!"

"You are mistaken, Allan. I have heard more of what has happened than you suppose."

"What! the dreadful mess I'm in with Miss Gwilt? the row with the major? the infernal scandal-mongering in the neighbourhood? You don't mean to say——?"

"Yes," interposed Midwinter quietly, "I have heard of it all."

"Good heavens! how? Did you stop at Thorpe-Ambrose on your way back? Have you been in the coffee-room at the hotel? Have you met Pedgift? Have you dropped into the Reading Room, and seen what they call the freedom of the press in the town newspaper?"

Midwinter paused before he answered, and looked up at the sky. The clouds had been gathering unnoticed over their heads, and the first rain-drops were beginning to fall.

"Come in here," said Allan. "We'll go up to breakfast this way." He led Midwinter through the open French window into his own sitting-room. The wind blew towards that side of the house, and the rain followed them in. Midwinter, who was last, turned and closed the window.

Allan was too eager for the answer which the weather had interrupted, to wait for it till they reached the breakfast-room. He stopped close at the window, and added two more to his string of questions.

"How can you possibly have heard about me and Miss Gwilt?" he asked. "Who told you?"

"Miss Gwilt herself," replied Midwinter gravely.

Allan's manner changed the moment the governess's name passed his friend's lips.

"I wish you had heard my story first," he said. "Where did you meet with Miss Gwilt?"

There was a momentary pause. They both stood still at the window, absorbed in the interest of the moment. They both forgot that their contemplated place of shelter from the rain had been the breakfast-room upstairs.

"Before I answer your question," said Midwinter a little constrainedly, "I want to ask you something, Allan, on my side. Is it really true that you are in some way concerned in Miss Gwilt's leaving Major Milroy's service?"

There was another pause. The disturbance which had begun to appear in Allan's manner palpably increased.

"It's rather a long story," he began. "I have been taken in, Midwinter. I've been imposed on by a person, who—I can't help saying it—who cheated me into promising what I oughtn't to have promised, and doing what I had better not have done. It isn't breaking my promise to tell you. I can trust in your discretion, can't I? You will never say a word, will you?"

"Stop!" said Midwinter. "Don't trust me with any secrets which are not your own. If you have given a promise, don't trifle with it, even in speaking to such an intimate friend as I am." He laid his hand

gently and kindly on Allan's shoulder. "I can't help seeing that I have made you a little uncomfortable," he went on. "I can't help seeing that my question is not so easy a one to answer as I had hoped and supposed. Shall we wait a little? shall we go upstairs and breakfast first?"

Allan was far too earnestly bent on presenting his conduct to his friend in the right aspect, to heed Midwinter's suggestion. He spoke eagerly on the instant, without moving from the window.

"My dear fellow, it's a perfectly easy question to answer. Only——" He hesitated. "Only it requires what I'm a bad hand at—it requires an explanation."

"Do you mean," asked Midwinter more seriously, but not less gently than before, "that you must first justify yourself, and then answer my question?"

"That's it!" said Allan, with an air of relief. "You've hit the right nail on the head, just as usual."

Midwinter's face darkened for the first time. "I am sorry to hear it," he said; his voice sinking low, and his eyes dropping to the ground as he spoke.

The rain was beginning to fall thickly. It swept across the garden, straight on the closed windows, and pattered heavily against the glass.

"Sorry!" repeated Allan. "My dear fellow, you haven't heard the particulars yet. Wait till I explain the thing first."

"You are a bad hand at explanations," said Midwinter, repeating Allan's own words. "Don't place yourself at a disadvantage. Don't explain it."

Allan looked at him, in silent perplexity and surprise.

"You are my friend—my best and dearest friend," Midwinter went on. "I can't bear to let you justify yourself to me as if I was your judge, or as if I doubted you." He looked up again at Allan frankly and kindly as he said those words. "Besides," he resumed, "I think if I look into my memory, I can anticipate your explanation. We had a moment's talk, before I went away, about some very delicate questions, which you proposed putting to Major Milroy. I remember I warned you; I remember I had my misgivings. Should I be guessing right if I guessed that those questions have been in some way the means of leading you into a false position? If it is true that you have been concerned in Miss Gwilt's leaving her situation, is it also true—is it only doing you justice to believe—that any mischief for which you are responsible, has been mischief innocently done?"

"Yes," said Allan, speaking for the first time a little constrainedly on his side. "It is only doing me justice to say that." He stopped and began drawing lines absently with his finger on the blurred surface of the window-pane. "You're not like other people, Midwinter," he resumed suddenly, with an effort; "and I should have liked you to have heard the particulars all the same."

"I will hear them if you desire it," returned Midwinter. "But I am

satisfied without another word, that you have not willingly been the means of depriving Miss Gwilt of her situation. If that is understood between you and me, I think we need say no more. Besides, I have another question to ask, of much greater importance: a question that has been forced on me by what I saw with my own eyes, and heard with my own ears, last night."

He stopped, recoiling in spite of himself. "Shall we go upstairs first?" he asked abruptly, leading the way to the door, and trying to gain time.

It was useless. Once again, the room which they were both free to leave, the room which one of them had twice tried to leave already, held them as if they were prisoners.

Without answering, without even appearing to have heard Midwinter's proposal to go upstairs, Allan followed him mechanically as far as the opposite side of the window. There he stopped. "Midwinter!" he burst out, in a sudden panic of astonishment and alarm, "there seems to be something strange between us! you're not like yourself. What is it?"

With his hand on the lock of the door, Midwinter turned, and looked back into the room. The moment had come. His haunting fear of doing his friend an injustice had shown itself in a restraint of word, look, and action, which had been marked enough to force its way to Allan's notice. The one course left now, in the dearest interests of the friendship that united them, was to speak at once, and to speak boldly.

"There's something strange between us," reiterated Allan. "For God's sake what is it?"

Midwinter took his hand from the door, and came down again to the window, fronting Allan. He occupied the place, of necessity, which Allan had just left. It was the side of the window on which the Statuette stood. The little figure, placed on its projecting bracket, was close behind him on his right hand. No signs of change appeared in the stormy sky. The rain still swept slanting across the garden, and pattered heavily against the glass.

"Give me your hand, Allan."

Allan gave it, and Midwinter held it firmly while he spoke.

"There is something strange between us," he said. "There is something to be set right which touches you nearly; and it has not been set right yet. You asked me just now where I met with Miss Gwilt. I met with her on my way back here, upon the high road on the farther side of the town. She entreated me to protect her from a man who was following, and frightening her. I saw the scoundrel with my own eyes, and I should have laid hands on him, if Miss Gwilt herself had not stopped me. She gave a very strange reason for stopping me. She said I didn't know who his employer was."

Allan's ruddy colour suddenly deepened; he looked aside quickly through the window at the pouring rain. At the same moment their hands fell apart, and there was a pause of silence on either side. Midwinter was the first to speak again.

"Later in the evening," he went on, "Miss Gwilt explained herself. She told me two things. She declared that the man whom I had seen following her was a hired spy. I was surprised, but I could not dispute it. She told me next, Allan—what I believe with my whole heart and soul to be a falsehood which has been imposed on her as the truth—she told me that the spy was in *your* employment!"

Allan turned instantly from the window, and looked Midwinter full in the face again. "I *must* explain myself this time," he said resolutely.

The ashy paleness, peculiar to him in moments of strong emotion, began to show itself on Midwinter's cheeks.

"More explanations!" he said, and drew back a step, with his eyes fixed in a sudden terror of inquiry on Allan's face.

"You don't know what I know, Midwinter. You don't know that what I have done has been done with a good reason. And what is more, I have not trusted to myself—I have had good advice."

"Did you hear what I said just now?" asked Midwinter, incredulously; "you can't—surely, you can't have been attending to me?"

"I haven't missed a word," rejoined Allan. "I tell you again, you don't know what I know of Miss Gwilt. She has threatened Miss Milroy. Miss Milroy is in danger while her governess stops in this neighbourhood."

Midwinter dismissed the major's daughter from the conversation with a contemptuous gesture of his hand.

"I don't want to hear about Miss Milroy," he said. "Don't mix up Miss Milroy—— Good God, Allan, am I to understand that the spy set to watch Miss Gwilt was doing his vile work with your approval?"

"Once for all, my dear fellow, will you, or will you not, let me explain?"

"Explain!" cried Midwinter, his eyes aflame, and his hot Creole blood rushing crimson into his face. "Explain the employment of a spy? What! after having driven Miss Gwilt out of her situation, by meddling with her private affairs, you meddle again, by the vilest of all means—the means of a paid spy? You set a watch on the woman whom you yourself told me you loved, only a fortnight since! the woman you were thinking of as your wife! I don't believe it; I won't believe it. Is my head failing me? Is it Allan Armadale I am speaking to? Is it Allan Armadale's face looking at me? Stop! you are acting under some mistaken scruple. Some low fellow has crept into your confidence, and has done this in your name without telling you first."

Allan controlled himself with admirable patience and admirable consideration for the temper of his friend. "If you persist in refusing to hear me," he said, "I must wait as well as I can till my turn comes."

"Tell me you are a stranger to the employment of that man, and I will hear you willingly."

"Suppose there should be a necessity, that you know nothing about, for employing him?"

"I acknowledge no necessity for the cowardly persecution of a helpless woman."

A momentary flush of irritation—momentary, and no more—passed over Allan's face. "You mightn't think her quite so helpless," he said, "if you knew the truth."

"Are *you* the man to tell me the truth?" retorted the other. "You who have refused to hear her in her own defence! You, who have closed the doors of this house against her!"

Allan still controlled himself, but the effort began at last to be visible.

"I know your temper is a hot one," he said. "But for all that, your violence quite takes me by surprise. I can't account for it, unless——" he hesitated a moment, and then finished the sentence in his usual frank, outspoken way—"unless you are sweet yourself on Miss Gwilt."

Those last words heaped fuel on the fire. They stripped the truth instantly of all concealments and disguises, and laid it bare to view. Allan's instinct had guessed, and the guiding influence stood revealed of Midwinter's interest in Miss Gwilt.

"What right have you to say that?" he asked, with raised voice and threatening eyes.

"I told *you*," said Allan, simply, "when I thought I was sweet on her myself. Come! come! it's a little hard, I think, even if you *are* in love with her, to believe everything she tells you, and not to let me say a word. Is *that* the way you decide between us?"

"Yes, it is!" cried the other, infuriated by Allan's second allusion to Miss Gwilt. "When I am asked to choose between the employer of a spy, and the victim of a spy, I side with the victim!"

"Don't try me too hard, Midwinter; I have a temper to lose as well as you."

He stopped, struggling with himself. The torture of passion in Midwinter's face, from which a less simple and less generous nature might have recoiled in horror, touched Allan suddenly with an artless distress, which, at that moment, was little less than sublime. He advanced, with his eyes moistening, and his hand held out. "You asked me for my hand just now," he said, "and I gave it you. Will you remember old times, and give me yours, before it's too late?"

"No!" retorted Midwinter, furiously. "I may meet Miss Gwilt again, and I may want my hand free to deal with your spy!"

He had drawn back along the wall, as Allan advanced, until the bracket which supported the Statuette was before instead of behind him. In the madness of his passion, he saw nothing but Allan's face confronting him. In the madness of his passion, he stretched out his right hand as he answered and shook it threateningly in the air. It struck the forgotten projection of the bracket—and the next instant the Statuette lay in fragments on the floor.

The rain drove slanting over flower-bed and lawn, and pattered heavily against the glass; and the two Armadales stood by the window,

as the two Shadows had stood in the second Vision of the Dream, with the wreck of the image between them.

Allan stooped over the fragments of the little figure, and lifted them one by one from the floor. "Leave me," he said, without looking up, "or we shall both repent it."

Without a word, Midwinter moved back slowly. He stood for the second time with his hand on the door, and looked his last at the room. The horror of the night on the Wreck had got him once more, and the flame of his passion was quenched in an instant.

"The Dream!" he whispered, under his breath. "The Dream again!"

The door was tried from the outside, and a servant appeared with a trivial message about the breakfast.

Midwinter looked at the man with a blank, dreadful helplessness in his face. "Show me the way out," he said. "The place is dark, and the room turns round with me."

The servant took him by the arm, and silently led him out.

As the door closed on them, Allan picked up the last fragment of the broken figure. He sat down alone at the table, and hid his face in his hands. The self-control which he had bravely preserved under exasperation renewed again and again, now failed him at last in the friendless solitude of his room; and in the first bitterness of feeling that Midwinter had turned against him like the rest, he burst into tears.

The moments followed each other, the slow time wore on. Little by little the signs of a new elemental disturbance began to show themselves in the summer storm. The shadow of a swiftly-deepening darkness swept over the sky. The pattering of the rain lessened with the lessening wind. There was a momentary hush of stillness. Then on a sudden, the rain poured down again like a cataract, and the low roll of thunder came up solemnly on the dying air.

CHAPTER IX.

SHE KNOWS THE TRUTH.

1. *From Mr. Bashwood to Miss Gwilt.*

"Thorpe-Ambrose, July 20th, 1851.

"DEAR MADAM—I received yesterday, by private messenger, your obliging note, in which you direct me to communicate with you, through the post only, as long as there is reason to believe that any visitors who may come to you are likely to be observed. May I be permitted to say, that I look forward with respectful anxiety to the time when I shall again enjoy the only real happiness I have ever experienced—the happiness of personally addressing you?

"In compliance with your desire that I should not allow this day

(the Sunday) to pass without privately noticing what went on at the great house, I took the keys, and went this morning to the steward's office. I accounted for my appearance to the servants, by informing them that I had work to do which it was important to complete in the shortest possible time. The same excuse would have done for Mr. Armadale, if we had met, but no such meeting happened.

"Although I was at Thorpe-Ambrose, in what I thought good time, I was too late to see or hear anything myself of a serious quarrel which appeared to have taken place, just before I arrived, between Mr. Armadale and Mr. Midwinter.

"All the little information I can give you in this matter is derived from one of the servants. The man told me that he heard the voices of the two gentlemen loud, in Mr. Armadale's sitting-room. He went in to announce breakfast shortly afterwards, and found Mr. Midwinter in such a dreadful state of agitation, that he had to be helped out of the room. The servant tried to take him upstairs to lie down and compose himself. He declined, saying he would wait a little first in one of the lower rooms, and begging that he might be left alone. The man had hardly got downstairs again, when he heard the front door opened and closed. He ran back, and found that Mr. Midwinter was gone. The rain was pouring at the time, and thunder and lightning came soon afterwards. Dreadful weather, certainly, to go out in. The servant thinks Mr. Midwinter's mind was unsettled. I sincerely hope not. Mr. Midwinter is one of the few people I have met with in the course of my life who have treated me kindly.

"Hearing that Mr. Armadale still remained in his sitting-room, I went into the steward's office (which, as you may remember, is on the same side of the house), and left the door ajar, and set the window open, waiting and listening for anything that might happen. Dear madam, there was a time when I might have thought such a position in the house of my employer not a very becoming one. Let me hasten to assure you that this is far from being my feeling now. I glory in any position which makes me serviceable to *you*.

"The state of the weather seemed hopelessly adverse to that renewal of intercourse between Mr. Armadale and Miss Milroy, which you so confidently anticipate, and of which you are so anxious to be made aware. Strangely enough, however, it is actually in consequence of the state of the weather, that I am now in a position to give you the very information you require. Mr. Armadale and Miss Milroy met about an hour since. The circumstances were as follows :—

"Just at the beginning of the thunderstorm, I saw one of the grooms run across from the stables, and heard him tap at his master's window. Mr. Armadale opened the window, and asked what was the matter. The groom said he came with a message from the coachman's wife. She had seen from her room over the stables (which looks on to the park,) Miss Milroy quite alone, standing for shelter under one of the trees. As that part of the park was at some distance from the major's cottage, she had thought that

her master might wish to send and ask the young lady into the house—especially as she had placed herself, with a thunderstorm coming on, in what might turn out to be a very dangerous position.

“The moment Mr. Armadale understood the man’s message, he called for the waterproof things and the umbrellas, and ran out himself, instead of leaving it to the servants. In a little time, he and the groom came back with Miss Milroy between them, as well protected as could be from the rain.

“I ascertained from one of the women-servants, who had taken the young lady into a bedroom, and had supplied her with such dry things as she wanted, that Miss Milroy had been afterwards shown into the drawing-room, and that Mr. Armadale was there with her. The only way of following your instructions, and finding out what passed between them, was to go round the house in the pelting rain, and get into the conservatory (which opens into the drawing-room) by the outer door. I hesitate at nothing, dear madam, in your service; I would cheerfully get wet every day, to please you. Besides, though I may at first sight be thought rather an elderly man, a wetting is of no very serious consequence to me. I assure you I am not so old as I look, and I am of a stronger constitution than appears.

“It was impossible for me to get near enough in the conservatory to see what went on in the drawing-room, without the risk of being discovered. But most of the conversation reached me, except when they dropped their voices. This is the substance of what I heard:—

“I gathered that Miss Milroy had been prevailed on, against her will, to take refuge from the thunderstorm in Mr. Armadale’s house. She said so at least, and she gave two reasons. The first was, that her father had forbidden all intercourse between the cottage and the great house. Mr. Armadale met this objection by declaring that her father had issued his orders under a total misconception of the truth, and by entreating her not to treat him as cruelly as the major had treated him. He entered, I suspect, into some explanations at this point, but as he dropped his voice, I am unable to say what they were. His language, when I did hear it, was confused and ungrammatical. It seemed, however, to be quite intelligible enough to persuade Miss Milroy that her father had been acting under a mistaken impression of the circumstances. At least, I infer this; for, when I next heard the conversation, the young lady was driven back to her second objection to being in the house—which was, that Mr. Armadale had behaved very badly to her, and that he richly deserved that she should never speak to him again.

“In this latter case, Mr. Armadale attempted no defence of any kind. He agreed with her that he had behaved badly; he agreed with her that he richly deserved that she should never speak to him again. At the same time he implored her to remember that he had suffered his punishment already. He was disgraced in the neighbourhood; and his dearest friend, his one intimate friend in the world, had that very morning turned against him like the rest. Far or near, there was not a living creature whom

he was fond of, to comfort him, or to say a friendly word to him. He was lonely and miserable, and his heart ached for a little kindness—and that was his only excuse for asking Miss Milroy to forget and forgive the past.

"I must leave you, I fear, to judge for yourself of the effect of this on the young lady; for though I tried hard, I failed to catch what she said. I am almost certain I heard her crying, and Mr. Armadale entreating her not to break his heart. They whispered a great deal, which aggravated me. I was afterwards alarmed by Mr. Armadale coming out into the conservatory to pick some flowers. He did not come as far, fortunately, as the place where I was hidden; and he went in again into the drawing-room, and there was more talking (I suspect at close quarters), which to my great regret I again failed to catch. Pray forgive me for having so little to tell you. I can only add, that when the storm cleared off, Miss Milroy went away with the flowers in her hand, and with Mr. Armadale escorting her from the house. My own humble opinion is that he had a powerful friend at court, all through the interview, in the young lady's own liking for him.

"This is all I can say at present, with the exception of one other thing I heard, which I blush to mention. But your word is law, and you have ordered me to have no concealments from you.

"Their talk turned once, dear madam, on yourself. I think I heard the word 'Creature' from Miss Milroy; and I am certain that Mr. Armadale, while acknowledging that he had once admired you, added that circumstances had since satisfied him of 'his folly.' I quote his own expression—it made me quite tremble with indignation. If I may be permitted to say so, the man who admires Miss Gwilt lives in paradise. Respect, if nothing else, ought to have closed Mr. Armadale's lips. He is my employer, I know—but, after his calling it an act of folly to admire you (though I am his deputy steward), I utterly despise him.

"Trusting that I may have been so happy as to give you satisfaction thus far, and earnestly desirous to deserve the honour of your continued confidence in me, I remain, dear madam,

"Your grateful and devoted servant,

"FELIX BASWOOD."

2.—From Mrs. Oldershaw to Miss Gwilt.

"Diana Street, Monday, July 31st.

"MY DEAR LIDIA,—I trouble you with a few lines. They are written under a sense of the duty which I owe to myself, in our present position towards each other.

"I am not at all satisfied with the tone of your two last letters; and I am still less pleased at your leaving me this morning without any letter at all—and this when we had arranged, in the doubtful state of our prospects, that I was to hear from you every day. I can only interpret

your conduct in one way. I can only infer that matters at Thorpe-Ambrose, having been all mismanaged, are all going wrong.

'It is not my present object to reproach you, for why should I waste time, language, and paper? I merely wish to recall to your memory certain considerations which you appear to be disposed to overlook. Shall I put them in the plainest English? Yes—for with all my faults, I am frankness personified.

"In the first place, then, I have an interest in your becoming Mrs. Armadale of Thorpe-Ambrose as well as you. Secondly, I have provided you (to say nothing of good advice) with all the money needed to accomplish our object. Thirdly, I hold your notes-of-hand, at short dates, for every farthing so advanced. Fourthly and lastly, though I am indulgent to a fault in the capacity of a friend—in the capacity of a woman of business, my dear, I am not to be trifled with. That is all, Lydia, at least for the present.

"Pray don't suppose I write in anger; I am only sorry and disappointed. My state of mind resembles David's. If I had the wings of a dove, I would flee away and be at rest.

"Affectionately yours,

"MARIA OLDERSHAW."

3.—*From Mr. Bashwood to Miss Gwilt.*

"Thorpe-Ambrose, July 21st.

"DEAR MADAM,—You will probably receive these lines a few hours after my yesterday's communication reaches you. I posted my first letter last night, and I shall post this before noon to-day.

"My present object in writing is to give you some more news from this house. I have the inexpressible happiness of announcing that Mr. Armadale's disgraceful intrusion on your privacy is at an end. The watch set on your actions is to be withdrawn this day. I write, dear madam, with the tears in my eyes—tears of joy, caused by feelings which I ventured to express in my previous letter (see first paragraph towards the end). Pardon me this personal reference. I can speak to you (I don't know why) so much more readily with my pen than with my tongue.

"Let me try to compose myself, and proceed with my narrative.

"I had just arrived at the steward's office this morning, when Mr. Pedgift the elder followed me to the great house to see Mr. Armadale by special appointment. It is needless to say that I at once suspended any little business there was to do, feeling that your interests might possibly be concerned. It is also most gratifying to add that this time circumstances favoured me. I was able to stand under the open window, and to hear the whole interview.

"Mr. Armadale explained himself at once in the plainest terms. He gave orders that the person who had been hired to watch you should be instantly dismissed. On being asked to explain this sudden change of

purpose, he did not conceal that it was owing to the effect produced on his mind by what had passed between Mr. Midwinter and himself on the previous day. Mr. Midwinter's language, cruelly unjust as it was, had nevertheless convinced him that no necessity whatever could excuse any proceeding so essentially base in itself as the employment of a spy, and on that conviction he was now determined to act.

"But for your own positive directions to me to conceal nothing that passes here in which your name is concerned, I should really be ashamed to report what Mr. Pedgift said on his side. He has behaved kindly to me, I know. But if he was my own brother, I could never forgive him the tone in which he spoke of you, and the obstinacy with which he tried to make Mr. Armadale change his mind.

"He began by attacking Mr. Midwinter. He declared that Mr. Midwinter's opinion was the very worst opinion that could be taken; for it was quite plain that you, dear madam, had twisted him round your finger. Producing no effect by this coarse suggestion (which nobody who knows you could for a moment believe), Mr. Pedgift next referred to Miss Milroy, and asked Mr. Armadale if he had given up all idea of protecting her. What this meant I cannot imagine. I can only report it for your private consideration. Mr. Armadale briefly answered that he had his own plan for protecting Miss Milroy, and that the circumstances were altered in that quarter, or words to a similar effect. Still Mr. Pedgift persisted. He went on (I blush to mention) from bad to worse. He tried to persuade Mr. Armadale next to bring an action at law against one or other of the persons who had been most strongly condemning his conduct in the neighbourhood, for the purpose—I really hardly know how to write it—of getting you into the witness-box. And worse yet: when Mr. Armadale still said No, Mr. Pedgift, after having, as I suspected by the sound of his voice, been on the point of leaving the room, artfully came back, and proposed sending for a detective officer from London, simply to look at you. 'The whole of this mystery about Miss Gwilt's true character,' he said, 'may turn on a question of identity. It won't cost much to have a man down from London; and it's worth trying whether her face is or is not known at head-quarters to the police.' I again and again assure you, dearest lady, that I only repeat those abominable words from a sense of duty towards yourself. I shook—I declare I shook from head to foot when I heard them.

"To resume, for there is more to tell you.

"Mr. Armadale (to his credit—I don't deny it, though I don't like him) still said No. He appeared to be getting irritated under Mr. Pedgift's persistence, and he spoke in a somewhat hasty way. 'You persuaded me on the last occasion when we talked about this,' he said, 'to do something that I have been since heartily ashamed of. You won't succeed in persuading me, Mr. Pedgift, a second time.' Those were his words. Mr. Pedgift took him up short; Mr. Pedgift seemed to be nettled on his side.

"'If that is the light in which you see my advice, sir,' he said, 'the

less you have of it for the future, the better. Your character and position are publicly involved in this matter between yourself and Miss Gwilt; and you persist, at a most critical moment, in taking a course of your own, which I believe will end badly. After what I have already said and done in this very serious case, I can't consent to go on with it with both my hands tied; and I can't drop it with credit to myself, while I remain publicly known as your solicitor. You leave me no alternative, sir, but to resign the honour of acting as your legal adviser.' 'I am sorry to hear it,' says Mr. Armadale, 'but I have suffered enough already through interfering with Miss Gwilt. I can't and won't stir any further in the matter.' 'You may not stir any further in it, sir,' says Mr. Pedgift, 'and I shall not stir any further in it, for it has ceased to be a question of professional interest to me. But mark my words, Mr. Armadale, you are not at the end of this business yet. Some other person's curiosity may go on from the point where you (and I) have stopped, and some other person's hand may let the broad daylight in yet on Miss Gwilt.'

"I report their language, dear madam, almost word for word, I believe, as I heard it. It produced an indescribable impression on me; it filled me, I hardly know why, with quite a panic of alarm. I don't at all understand it, and I understand still less what happened immediately afterwards.

"Mr. Pedgift's voice, when he said those last words, sounded dreadfully close to me. He must have been speaking at the open window, and he must, I fear, have seen me under it. I had time, before he left the house, to get out quietly from among the laurels, but not to get back to the office. Accordingly I walked away along the drive towards the lodge, as if I was going on some errand connected with the steward's business.

"Before long, Mr. Pedgift overtook me in his gig, and stopped. 'So you feel some curiosity about Miss Gwilt, do you?' he said. 'Gratify your curiosity by all means—I don't object to it.' I felt naturally nervous, but I managed to ask him what he meant. He didn't answer; he only looked down at me from the gig in a very odd manner, and laughed. 'I have known stranger things happen even than *that*!' he said to himself suddenly, and drove off.

"I have ventured to trouble you with this last incident, though it may seem of no importance in your eyes, in the hope that your superior ability may be able to explain it. My own poor faculties, I confess, are quite unable to penetrate Mr. Pedgift's meaning. All I know is, that he has no right to accuse me of any such impertinent feeling as curiosity in relation to a lady whom I ardently esteem and admire. I dare not put it in warmer words.

"I have only to add that I am in a position to be of continued service to you here if you wish it. Mr. Armadale has just been into the office, and has told me briefly that, in Mr. Midwinter's continued absence, I am still to act as steward's deputy till further notice. Believe me, dear madam, anxiously and devotedly yours,

"FELIX BARKWOOD."

4.—*From Allan Armadale to the Rev. Decimus Brock.*

"Thorpe-Ambrose, Tuesday.

"MY DEAR MR. BROCK.—I am in sad trouble. Midwinter has quarrelled with me and left me; and my lawyer has quarrelled with me and left me; and (except dear little Miss Milroy, who has forgiven me) all the neighbours have turned their backs on me. There is a good deal about 'me' in this, but I can't help it. I am very miserable alone in my own house. Do pray come and see me! You are the only old friend I have left, and I do long so to tell you about it. N.B.—On my word of honour as a gentleman, I am not to blame. Yours affectionately,

"ALLAN ARMADALE."

"P.S.—I would come to you (for this place is grown quite hateful to me), but I have a reason for not going too far away from Miss Milroy just at present."

5.—*From Robert Stapleton to Allan Armadale, Esq.*

"Boscombe Rectory, Thursday Morning.

"RESPECTED SIR,—I see a letter in your writing, on the table along with the others, which I am sorry to say my master is not well enough to open. He is down with a sort of low fever. The doctor says it has been brought on with worry and anxiety, which master was not strong enough to bear. This seems likely; for I was with him when he went to London last month, and what with his own business, and the business of looking after that person who afterwards gave us the slip, he was worried and anxious all the time; and for the matter of that, so was I.

"My master was talking of you a day or two since. He seemed unwilling that you should know of his illness, unless he got worse. But I think you ought to know of it. At the same time he is not worse—perhaps a trifle better. The doctor says he must be kept very quiet, and not agitated on any account. So he pleased to take no notice of this—I mean in the way of coming to the rectory. I have the doctor's orders to say it is not needful, and it would only upset my master in the state he is in now.

"I will write again if you wish it. Please accept of my duty, and believe me to remain, sir, your humble servant,

"ROBERT STAPLETON.

"P.S.—The yacht has been rigged and repainted, waiting your orders. She looks beautiful."

6.—*From Mrs. Oldershaw to Miss Gwilt.*

"Diana Street, July 24th.

"MISS GWILT,—The post-hour has passed for three mornings following, and has brought me no answer to my letter. Are you purposely bent on

insulting me? or have you left Thorpe-Ambrose? In either case, I won't put up with your conduct any longer. The law shall bring you to book, if I can't.

"Your first note-of-hand (for thirty pounds) falls due on Tuesday next, the 29th. If you had behaved with common consideration towards me, I would have let you renew it with pleasure. As things are, I shall have the note presented; and, if it is not paid, I shall instruct my man of business to take the usual course.

"Yours,

"MARIA OLDERSHAW."

7.—*From Miss Gwilt to Mrs. Oldershaw.*

"5, Paradise Place, Thorpe-Ambrose, July 25th.

"MRS. OLDERSHAW,—The time of your man of business being, no doubt, of some value, I write a line to assist him when he takes the usual course. He will find me waiting to be arrested in the first-floor apartments, at the above address. In my present situation, and with my present thoughts, the best service you can possibly render me is to lock me up.

"L. G."

8.—*From Mrs. Oldershaw to Miss Gwilt.*

"Diana Street, July 26th.

"MY DARLING LYDIA,—The longer I live in this wicked world the more plainly I see that women's own tempers are the worst enemies women have to contend with. What a truly regrettable style of correspondence we have fallen into! What a sad want of self-restraint, my dear, on your side and on mine!

"Let me, as the oldest in years, be the first to make the needful excuses, the first to blush for my own want of self-control. Your cruel neglect, Lydia, stung me into writing as I did. I am so sensitive to ill-treatment, when it is inflicted on me by a person whom I love and admire—and, though turned sixty, I am still (unfortunately for myself) so young at heart. Accept my apologies for having made use of my pen, when I ought to have been content to take refuge in my pocket-handkerchief. Forgive your attached Maria for being still young at heart!

"But oh, my dear—though I own I threatened you—how hard of you to take me at my word! How cruel of you, if your debt had been ten times what it is, to suppose me capable (whatever I might say) of the odious inhumanity of arresting my bosom friend! Heavens! have I deserved to be taken at my word in this unmercifully exact way, after the years of tender intimacy that have united us? But I don't complain; I only mourn over the frailty of our common human nature. Let us expect as little of each other as possible, my dear; we are both women, and we can't help it. I declare, when I reflect on the origin of our unfortunate

sex—when I remember that we were all originally made of no better material than the rib of a man (and that rib of so little importance to its possessor that he never appears to have missed it afterwards), I am quite astonished at our virtues, and not in the least surprised at our faults.

"I am wandering a little; I am losing myself in serious thought, like that sweet character in Shakspeare who was 'fancy free.' One last word, dearest, to say that my longing for an answer to this proceeds entirely from my wish to hear from you again in your old friendly tone, and is quite unconnected with any curiosity to know what you are doing at Thorpe-Ambrose—except such curiosity as you yourself might approve. Need I add that I beg you as a favour to *me*, to renew, on the customary terms? I refer to the little bill due on Tuesday next, and I venture to suggest that day six weeks.

"Yours, with a truly motherly feeling,

"MARIA OLDERSHAW."

9.—*From Miss Gwilt to Mrs. Oldershaw.*

"Paradise Place, July 27th.

"I HAVE just got your last letter. The brazen impudence of it has roused me. I am to be treated like a child, am I?—to be threatened first, and then, if threatening fails, to be coaxed afterwards? You *shall* coax me; you shall know, my motherly friend, the sort of child you have to deal with.

"I had a reason, Mrs. Oldershaw, for the silence which has so seriously offended you. I was afraid—yes, actually afraid—to let you into the secret of my thoughts. No such fear troubles me now. My only anxiety this morning is to make you my best acknowledgments for the manner in which you have written to me. After carefully considering it, I think the worst turn I can possibly do you, is to tell you what you are burning to know. So here I am at my desk, bent on telling it. You shall hear what has happened at Thorpe-Ambrose—you shall see my thoughts as plainly as I see them myself. If you don't bitterly repent, when you are at the end of this letter, not having held to your first resolution, and locked me up out of harm's way while you had the chance, my name is not Lydia Gwilt.

"Where did my last letter end? I don't remember, and don't care. Make it out as you can—I am not going back any further than this day week. That is to say, Sunday last.

"There was a thunderstorm in the morning. It began to clear off towards noon. I didn't go out—I waited to see Midwinter or to hear from him. (Are you surprised at my not writing 'Mr.' before his name? We have got so familiar, my dear, that 'Mr.' would be quite out of place.) He had left me the evening before, under very interesting circumstances. I had told him that his friend, Armadale, was persecuting me by means

of a hired spy. He had declined to believe it, and had gone straight to Thorpe-Ambrose to clear the thing up. I had let him kiss my hand before he went. He had promised to come back the next day (the Sunday). I felt I had secured my influence over him; and I believed he would keep his word.

"Well, the thunder passed away as I told you. The weather cleared up; the people walked out in their best clothes; the dinners came in from the baker's; I sat dreaming at my wretched little hired piano, nicely dressed and looking my best—and still no Midwinter appeared. It was late in the afternoon, and I was beginning to feel offended, when a letter was brought to me. It had been left by a strange messenger who went away again immediately. I looked at the letter. Midwinter at last—in writing, instead of in person. I began to feel more offended than ever—for, as I told you, I thought I had used my influence over him to better purpose.

"The letter, when I read it, set my mind off in a new direction. It surprised, it puzzled, it interested me. I thought, and thought, and thought of him, all the rest of the day.

"He began by asking my pardon for having doubted what I told him. Mr. Armadale's own lips had confirmed me. They had quarrelled (as I had anticipated they would)—and he, and the man who had once been his dearest friend on earth, had parted for ever. So far, I was not surprised. I was amused by his telling me in his extravagant way that he and his friend were parted for ever; and I rather wondered what he would think when I carried out my plan, and found my way into the great house on pretence of reconciling them.

"But the second part of the letter set me thinking. Here it is, in his own words.

"It is only by struggling against myself (and no language can say how hard the struggle has been) that I have decided on writing, instead of speaking to you. A merciless necessity claims my future life. I must leave Thorpe-Ambrose, I must leave England, without hesitating, without stopping to look back. There are reasons—terrible reasons, which I have madly trifled with—for my never letting Mr. Armadale set eyes on me, or hear of me again, after what has happened between us. I must go, never more to live under the same roof, never more to breathe the same air with that man. I must hide myself from him, under an assumed name; I must put the mountains and the seas between us. I have been warned as no human creature was ever warned before. I believe—I dare not tell you why—I believe that if the fascination you have for me draws me back to you, fatal consequences will come of it to the man whose life has been so strangely mingled with your life and mine—the man who was once your admirer and my friend. And yet, feeling this, seeing it in my mind as plainly as I see the sky above my head, there is a power in me that still shrinks from the one imperative sacrifice—sacrificing you again. I am fighting with it as a man fights with the strength of his

despair. I have been near enough, not an hour since, to see the house where you live, and have forced myself away again out of sight of it. Can I force myself away farther still, now that my letter is written—now, when the useless confession escapes me, and I own to loving you with the first love I have ever known, with the last love I shall ever feel? Let the coming time answer the question; I dare not write of it or think of it more.'

"Those were the last words. In that strange way the letter ended.

"I felt a perfect fever of curiosity to know what he meant. His loving me, of course, was easy enough to understand. But what did he mean by saying he had been warned? Why was he never to live under the same roof, never to breathe the same air again with young Armadale? What sort of quarrel could it be which obliged one man to hide himself from another under an assumed name, and to put the mountains and the seas between them? Above all, if he came back, and let me fascinate him, why should it be fatal to the hateful lout who possesses the noble fortune, and lives in the great house?

"I never longed in my life as I longed to see him again, and put these questions to him. I got quite superstitious about it as the day drew on. They gave me a sweetbread and a cherry pudding for dinner. I actually tried if he would come back by the stones in the plate! He will, he won't, he will, he won't—and so on. It ended in 'he won't.' I rang the bell, and had the things taken away. I contradicted Destiny quite fiercely. I said, 'He will!' and I waited at home for him.

"You don't know what a pleasure it is to me to give you all these little particulars. Count up—my bosom friend, my second mother—count up the money you have advanced on the chance of my becoming Mrs. Armadale, and then think of my feeling this breathless interest in another man. Oh, Mrs. Oldershaw, how intensely I enjoy the luxury of irritating you!

"The day got on towards evening. I rang again, and sent down to borrow a railway time-table. What trains were there to take him away on Sunday? The national respect for the Sabbath stood my friend. There was only one train, which had started hours before he wrote to me. I went and consulted my glass. It paid me the compliment of contradicting the divination by cherry-stones. My glass said, 'Get behind the window-curtain; he won't pass the long lonely evening without coming back again to look at the house.' I got behind the window-curtain, and waited with his letter in my hand.

"The dismal Sunday light faded, and the dismal Sunday quietness in the street grew quieter still. The dusk came, and I heard a step coming with it in the silence. My heart gave a little jump—only think of my having any heart left! I said to myself, 'Midwinter!' And Midwinter it was.

"When he came in sight he was walking slowly, stopping and hesitating at every two or three steps. My ugly little drawing-room window

seemed to be beckoning him on in spite of himself. After waiting till I saw him come to a standstill, a little aside from the house, but still within view of my irresistible window, I put on my things and slipped out by the back way into the garden. The landlord and his family were at supper, and nobody saw me. I opened the door in the wall, and got round by the lane into the street. At that awkward moment I suddenly remembered, what I had forgotten before, the spy set to watch me, who was, no doubt, waiting somewhere in sight of the house.

"It was necessary to get time to think, and it was (in my state of mind) impossible to let Midwinter go without speaking to him. In great difficulties you generally decide at once, if you decide at all. I decided to make an appointment with him for the next evening, and to consider in the interval how to manage the interview so that it might escape observation. This, as I felt at the time, was leaving my own curiosity free to torment me for four-and-twenty mortal hours—but what other choice had I? It was as good as giving up being mistress of Thorpe-Ambrose altogether, to come to a private understanding with Midwinter in the sight and possibly in the hearing of Armadale's spy.

"Finding an old letter of yours in my pocket, I drew back into the lane, and wrote on the blank leaf, with the little pencil that hangs at my watch-chain:—'I must and will speak to you. It is impossible to-night, but be in the street to-morrow at this time, and leave me afterwards for ever, if you like. When you have read this, overtake me, and say as you pass, without stopping or looking round, 'Yes, I promise.'

"I folded up the paper, and came on him suddenly from behind. As he started and turned round, I put the note into his hand, pressed his hand, and passed on. Before I had taken ten steps I heard him behind me. I can't say he didn't look round—I saw his big black eyes, bright and glittering in the dusk, devour me from head to foot in a moment; but otherwise he did what I told him. 'I can deny you nothing,' he whispered; 'I promise.' He went on and left me. I couldn't help thinking at the time how that brute and booby Armadale would have spoilt everything in the same situation.

"I tried hard all night to think of a way of making our interview of the next evening safe from discovery, and tried in vain. Even as early as this, I began to feel as if Midwinter's letter had, in some unaccountable manner, stupefied me.

"Monday morning made matters worse. News came from my faithful ally, Mr. Bashwood, that Miss Milroy and Armadale had met and become friends again. You may fancy the state I was in! An hour or two later there came more news from Mr. Bashwood—good news this time. The mischievous idiot at Thorpe-Ambrose had shown sense enough at last to be ashamed of himself. He had decided on withdrawing the spy that very day, and he and his lawyer had quarrelled in consequence.

"So here was the obstacle which I was too stupid to remove for myself, obligingly removed for me! No more need to fret about the

coming interview with Midwinter—and plenty of time to consider my next proceedings, now that Miss Milroy and her precious swain had come together again. Would you believe it, the letter, or the man himself (I don't know which), had taken such a hold on me that, though I tried and tried, I could think of nothing else—and this, when I had every reason to fear that Miss Milroy was in a fair way of changing her name to Armadale, and when I knew that my heavy debt of obligation to her was not paid yet? Was there ever such perversity? I can't account for it—can you?

"The dusk of the evening came at last. I looked out of the window—and there he was!

"I joined him at once; the people of the house, as before, being too much absorbed in their eating and drinking to notice anything else. 'We musn't be seen together here,' I whispered. 'I must go on first, and you must follow me.'

"He said nothing in the way of reply. What was going on in his mind I can't pretend to guess—but, after coming to his appointment, he actually hung back as if he was half inclined to go away again.

"'You look as if you were afraid of me,' I said.

"'I *am* afraid of you,' he answered—'of you, and of myself.'

"It was not encouraging; it was not complimentary. But I was in such a frenzy of curiosity by this time, that if he had been ruder still, I should have taken no notice of it. I led the way a few steps towards the new buildings, and stopped and looked round after him.

"'Must I ask it of you as a favour,' I said, 'after your giving me your promise, and after such a letter as you have written to me?'

"Something suddenly changed him; he was at my side in an instant. 'I beg your pardon, Miss Gwilt; lead the way where you please.' He dropped back a little after that answer, and I heard him say to himself, 'What *is* to be, *will* be. What have I to do with it, and what has she?'

"It could hardly have been the words, for I didn't understand them—it must have been the tone he spoke in, I suppose, that made me feel a momentary tremor. I was half inclined, without the ghost of a reason for it, to wish him good-night, and go in again. Not much like *me*, you will say. Not much, indeed! It didn't last a moment. Your darling Lydia soon came to her senses again.

"I led the way towards the unfinished cottages, and the country beyond. It would have been much more to my taste to have had him into the house, and have talked to him in the light of the candles. But I had risked it once already; and in this scandal-mongering place, and in my critical position, I was afraid to risk it again. The garden was not to be thought of either—for the landlord smokes his pipe there after his upper. There was no alternative but to take him away from the town.

"From time to time, I looked back as I went on. There he was,

always at the same distance, dim and ghostlike in the dusk, silently following me.

"I must leave off for a little while. The church bells have broken out, and the jangling of them drives me mad. In these days, when we have all got watches or clocks, why are bells wanted to remind us when the service begins? We don't require to be rung into the theatre. How excessively discreditable to the clergy to be obliged to ring us into the church!

"They have rung the congregation in at last—and I can take up my pen, and go on again.

"I was a little in doubt where to lead him to. The high-road was on one side of me—but, empty as it looked, somebody might be passing when we least expected it. The other way was through the coppice. I led him through the coppice.

"At the outskirts of the trees, on the other side, there was a dip in the ground, with some felled timber lying in it, and a little pool beyond, still and white and shining in the twilight. The long grazing-grounds rose over its farther shore, with the mist thickening on them, and a dim black line far away of cattle in slow procession going home. There wasn't a living creature near; there wasn't a sound to be heard. I sat down on one of the felled trees, and looked back for him. 'Come,' I said softly, 'come and sit by me here.'

"Why am I so particular about all this? I hardly know. The place made an unaccountably vivid impression on me, and I can't help writing about it. If I end badly—suppose we say on the scaffold?—I believe the last thing I shall see, before the hangman pulls the drop, will be the little shining pool, and the long misty grazing-grounds, and the cattle winding dimly home in the thickening night. Don't be alarmed, you worthy creature! My fancy plays me strange tricks sometimes—and there is a little of last night's laudanum, I dare say, in this part of my letter.

"He came—in the strangest silent way, like a man walking in his sleep—he came and sat down by me. Either the night was very close, or I was by this time literally in a fever—I couldn't bear my bonnet on; I couldn't bear my gloves. The want to look at him, and see what his singular silence meant, and the impossibility of doing it in the darkening light, irritated my nerves till I thought I should have screamed. I took his hand, to try if that would help me. It was burning hot; and it closed instantly on mine—you know how. Silence, after *that*, was not to be thought of. The one safe way was to begin talking to him at once.

"Don't despise me,' I said. 'I am obliged to bring you to this lonely place; I should lose my character if we were seen together.'

"I waited a little. His hand warned me once more not to let the silence continue. I determined to *make* him speak to me this time.

"'You have interested me, and frightened me,' I went on. 'You have written me a very strange letter. I must know what it means.'

"'It is too late to ask. *You* have taken the way, and *I* have taken the way, from which there is no turning back.' He made that strange answer in a tone that was quite new to me—a tone that made me even more uneasy than his silence had made me the moment before. 'Too late,' he repeated, 'too late! There is only one question to ask me now.'

"'What is it?'

"As I said the words, a sudden trembling passed from his hand to mine, and told me instantly that I had better have held my tongue. Before I could move, before I could think, he had me in his arms. 'Ask me if I love you,' he whispered. At the same moment his head sank on my bosom; and some unutterable torture that was in him burst its way out, as it does with *us*, in a passion of sobs and tears.

"My first impulse was the impulse of a fool. I was on the point of making our usual protest and defending myself in our usual way. Luckily or unluckily, I don't know which, I have lost the fine edge of the sensitiveness of youth; and I checked the first movement of my hands, and the first word on my lips. Oh, dear, how old I felt, while he was sobbing his heart out on my breast! How I thought of the time when he might have possessed himself of my love! All he had possessed himself of now was—my waist.

"I wonder whether I pitied him? It doesn't matter if I did. At any rate, my hand lifted itself somehow, and my fingers twined themselves softly in his hair. Horrible recollections came back to me of other times, and made me shudder as I touched him. And yet I did it. What fools women are!

"'I won't reproach you,' I said gently; 'I won't say this is a cruel advantage to take of me, in such a position as mine. You are dreadfully agitated—I will let you wait a little, and compose yourself.'

"Having got as far as that, I stopped to consider how I should put the questions to him that I was burning to ask. But I was too confused, I suppose, or perhaps too impatient to consider. I let out what was uppermost in my mind, in the words that came first.

"'I don't believe you love me,' I said. 'You write strange things to me; you frighten me with mysteries. What did you mean by saying in your letter that it would be fatal to Mr. Armadale if you came back to me? What danger can there be to Mr. Armadale ——?'

"Before I could finish the question, he suddenly lifted his head and unclasped his arms. I had apparently touched some painful subject which recalled him to himself. Instead of my shrinking from him, it was he who shrank from me. I felt offended with him; why, I don't know—but offended I was; and I thanked him with my bitterest emphasis, for remembering what was due to me, *at last!*

"'Do you believe in Dreams?' he burst out in the most strangely

abrupt manner, without taking the slightest notice of what I had said to him. 'Tell me,' he went on, without allowing me time to answer, 'were you, or was any relation of yours, ever connected with Allan Armadale's father or mother? Were you, or was anybody belonging to you, ever in the island of Madeira?'

"Conceive my astonishment, if you can. I turned cold. In an instant I turned cold all over. He was plainly in the secret of what had happened when I was in Mrs. Armadale's service in Madeira—in all probability before he was born! That was startling enough of itself. And he had evidently some reason of his own for trying to connect *me* with those events—which was more startling still.

"'No,' I said, as soon as I could trust myself to speak. 'I know nothing of his father or mother.'

"'And nothing of the island of Madeira?'

"'Nothing of the island of Madeira.'

"He turned his head away; and began talking to himself.

"'Strange!' he said. 'As certainly as I was in the Shadow's place at the window, *she* was in the Shadow's place at the pool!'

"Under other circumstances, his extraordinary behaviour might have alarmed me. But after his question about Madeira, there was some greater fear in me which kept all common alarm at a distance. I don't think I ever determined on anything in my life as I determined on finding out how he had got his information, and who he really was. It was quite plain to me that I had roused some hidden feeling in him by my question about Armadale, which was as strong in its way as his feeling for *me*. What had become of my influence over him?

"I couldn't imagine what had become of it; but I could and did set to work to make him feel it again.

"'Don't treat me cruelly,' I said; 'I didn't treat *you* cruelly just now. Oh, Mr. Midwinter, it's so lonely, it's so dark—don't frighten me!'

"'Frighten you!' He was close to me again in a moment. 'Frighten you!' He repeated the word with as much astonishment as if I had woke him from a dream, and charged him with something that he had said in his sleep.

"It was on the tip of my tongue, finding how I had surprised him, to take him while he was off his guard, and to ask why my question about Armadale had produced such a change in his behaviour to me. But after what had happened already, I was afraid to risk returning to the subject too soon. Something or other—what they call an instinct, I daresay—warned me to let Armadale alone for the present, and to talk to him first about himself. As I told you in one of my early letters, I had noticed signs and tokens in his manner and appearance which convinced me, young as he was, that he had done something or suffered something out of the common in his past life. I had asked myself more and more suspiciously every time I saw him, whether he was what he appeared to be; and first and foremost among my other doubts was a doubt whether

he was passing among us by his real name. Having secrets to keep about my own past life, and having gone myself in other days by more than one assumed name, I suppose I am all the readier to suspect other people when I find something mysterious about them. Any way, having the suspicion in my mind, I determined to startle him, as he had startled me, by an unexpected question on my side—a question about his name.

"While I was thinking, he was thinking—and, as it soon appeared, of what I had just said to him. 'I am so grieved to have frightened you,' he whispered, with that gentleness and humility which we all so heartily despise in a man when he speaks to other women, and which we all so dearly like when he speaks to ourselves. 'I hardly know what I have been saying,' he went on; 'my mind is miserably disturbed. Pray forgive me, if you can—I am not myself to-night.'

"'I am not angry,' I said; 'I have nothing to forgive. We are both imprudent—we are both unhappy.' I laid my head on his shoulder. 'Do you really love me?' I asked him softly, in a whisper.

"His arm stole round me again; and I felt the quick beat of his heart get quicker and quicker. 'If you only knew!' he whispered back; 'if you only knew——' He could say no more. I felt his face bending towards mine, and dropped my head lower, and stopped him in the very act of kissing me. 'No,' I said; 'I am only a woman who has taken your fancy. You are treating me as if I was your promised wife.'

"'Be my promised wife!' he whispered eagerly, and tried to raise my head. I kept it down. The horror of those old remembrances that you know of, came back, and made me tremble a little when he asked me to be his wife. I don't think I was actually faint; but something like faintness made me close my eyes. The moment I shut them, the darkness seemed to open as if lightning had split it: and the ghosts of *those other men* rose in the horrid gap, and looked at me.

"'Speak to me!' he whispered, tenderly. 'My darling, my angel, speak to me!'

"His voice helped me to recover myself. I had just sense enough left to remember that the time was passing, and that I had not put my question to him yet about his name.

"'Suppose I felt for you as you feel for me?' I said. 'Suppose I loved you dearly enough to trust you with the happiness of all my life to come?'

"I paused a moment to get my breath. It was unbearably still and close—the air seemed to have died when the night came.

"'Would you be marrying me honourably,' I went on, 'if you married me in your present name?'

"His arm dropped from my waist, and I felt him give one great start. After that he sat by me, still, and cold, and silent, as if my question had struck him dumb. I put my arm round his neck, and lifted my head again on his shoulder. Whatever the spell was I had laid on him, my coming closer in that way seemed to break it.

“ ‘Who told you?’—he stopped. ‘No,’ he went on, ‘nobody can have told you. What made you suspect——?’ He stopped again.

“ ‘Nobody told me,’ I said; ‘and I don’t know what made me suspect. Women have strange fancies sometimes. Is Midwinter really your name?’

“ ‘I can’t deceive you,’ he answered, after another interval of silence, ‘Midwinter is *not* really my name.’

“ ‘I nestled a little closer to him.

“ ‘What is your name?’ I asked.

“ ‘He hesitated.

“ ‘I lifted my face till my cheek just touched his. I persisted, with my lips close at his ear,—

“ ‘What, no confidence in me even yet! No confidence in the woman who has almost confessed she loves you—who has almost consented to be your wife!’

“ ‘He turned his face to mine. For the second time he tried to kiss me, and for the second time I stopped him.

“ ‘If I tell you my name,’ he said, ‘I must tell you more.’

“ ‘I let my cheek touch his cheek again.

“ ‘Why not?’ I said. ‘How can I love a man—much less marry him—if he keeps himself a stranger to me?’

“ ‘There was no answering that, as I thought. But he did answer it.

“ ‘It is a dreadful story,’ he said. ‘It may darken all your life, if you know it, as it has darkened mine.’

“ ‘I put my other arm round him, and persisted. ‘Tell it me; I’m not afraid; tell it me.’

“ ‘He began to yield to my other arm.

“ ‘Will you keep it a sacred secret?’ he said. ‘Never to be breathed—never to be known but to you and me?’

“ ‘I promised him it should be a secret. I waited in a perfect frenzy of expectation. Twice he tried to begin, and twice his courage failed him.

“ ‘I can’t!’ he broke out in a wild helpless way. ‘I can’t tell it!’

“ ‘My curiosity, or more likely my temper, got beyond all control. He had irritated me till I was reckless what I said or what I did. I suddenly clasped him close, and pressed my lips to his. ‘I love you!’ I whispered in a kiss. ‘Now will you tell me?’

“ ‘For the moment he was speechless. I don’t know whether I did it purposely to drive him wild. I don’t know whether I did it involuntarily in a burst of rage. Nothing is certain but that I interpreted his silence the wrong way. I pushed him back from me in a fury the instant after I had kissed him. ‘I hate you!’ I said. ‘You have maddened me into forgetting myself. Leave me! I don’t care for the darkness. Leave me instantly, and never see me again!’

“ ‘He caught me by the hand and stopped me. He spoke in a new voice—he suddenly *commanded*, as only men can.

"'Sit down,' he said. 'You have given me back my courage—you shall know who I am.'

"In the silence and the darkness all round us, I obeyed him, and sat down.

"In the silence and the darkness all round us, he took me in his arms again, and told me who he was.

"Shall I trust you with his story? Shall I tell you his real name? Shall I show you, as I threatened, the thoughts that have grown out of my interview with him, and out of all that has happened to me since that time?

"Or shall I keep his secret as I promised? and keep my own secret too, by bringing this weary long letter to an end at the very moment when you are burning to hear more!"

"Those are serious questions, Mrs. Oldershaw—more serious than you suppose. I have had time to calm down, and I begin to see what I failed to see when I first took up my pen to write to you—the wisdom of looking at consequences. Have I frightened myself in trying to frighten *you*? It is possible—strange as it may seem, it is really possible.

"I have been at the window for the last minute or two, thinking. There is plenty of time for thinking before the post leaves. The people are only now coming out of church.

"I have settled to put my letter on one side, and to take a look at my diary. In plainer words I must see what I risk if I decide on trusting you; and my diary will show me what my head is too weary to calculate without help. I have written the story of my days (and sometimes the story of my nights) much more regularly than usual for the last week, having reasons of my own for being particularly careful in this respect under present circumstances. If I end in doing what it is now in my mind to do, it would be madness to trust to my memory. The smallest forgetfulness of the slightest event that has happened from the night of my interview with Midwinter to the present time, might be utter ruin to me.

"'Utter ruin to her!' you will say. 'What kind of ruin does she mean?'"

"Wait a little, till I have asked my diary whether I can safely tell you?"

French Felons.

THE departure from Paris of La Chaine—the felons condemned to the *Bagnes*—is a sight of all sights the most melancholy and miserable. Crime, hardened to the intensity of steel—woe, in the agony of its wretchedness—melancholy, in its deepest depths—hypocrisy, for guilty penitence—desperation, with its loudest cursings—defiance shrieking out vengeance—supplication on its knees: the loud laugh—mockery—menaces! Society has done its worst. The law has exhausted its inflictions, and now the pent-up passions may burst in horrible outbreak. Only a few more moments of freedom—of such freedom—and the heavy chain will be riveted on these wretches, on many for ever. I am describing scenes I witnessed thirty years ago.

We are in the prison-yard—the cells have emptied out their *forçats*, young and old. Some weep and are silent, some shout fierce imprecations, others sing indecent songs. One man has his arms folded, and walks erect with steady measured steps, as if he were—what he is not—a conqueror; another hangs his head and skulks shufflingly along as if he were—what he is—a felon and a slave. There is a man who has ornamented himself with feathers, and flowers, and rags, who is dancing like a maniac or a mountebank. There is another who, before the iron collar is fastened round his neck, is describing by his gestures the whole of the horrid process, screaming with affected laughter, and seeking for some responses to his own hypocrisy. There is a hero who, having been a thief among nobles, is now well satisfied to be a noble among thieves; he has never read Milton, but he exemplifies the Satanic theory, “better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.” Here is an enemy of the world who owns in confession to his non-absolving self that the world has been stronger than he. There is another who but an hour ago, still believing in a lucky star, had some hope of redemption; but now, all is more than midnight, starless darkness.

As a preparation for their dreadful journey, in those days to be made on foot, some had collected the offerings of their friends—but many of them had no friends—in bundles, with such food and garments as the inspectors allowed them to receive. I believe the partings had taken place in their cells, before they were ordered into the yard to be grouped and fettered together. The smiths entered with heavy hammers and anvils high enough to enable them to rivet the iron circle which was placed round the neck of the convict, and which he busied himself in adjusting while the bolt was inserted behind, and riveted by a succession of blows, the misdirection of any one of which must have terminated the existence

of the victim. They were chained in pairs, the chains passing up and down a bar to which a certain number of the convicts were attached; and thus fettered, they were to walk some hundreds of miles, many of them barefooted, to the stations for which they were destined. A generation has passed since I witnessed what I have described. I believe the *forçats* are now conveyed in carriages to the *bagnes*. But it might be said England in those days was not much behind France in the public exhibitions even of unjudged prisoners. I remember to have seen long processions of accused prisoners, scarcely able to walk from the burden of the enormous gyves which were riveted around their legs, and which they held up by straps, while they were marched from the jails to the places where they were to be tried. The use of fetters was universal in our prisons. Mementos of these ancient usages may be still seen at the portals of many places of confinement.

I have not mentioned the soldiery. They form a part of every Parisian spectacle. With fixed bayonets, their great-coats strapped above their knapsacks, they are ready to march—the escort of the *misérables* on their weary travel. The sharp rattle of the drum announces that all is ready for departure, the iron gates are flung open, soldiers and felons enter upon their melancholy march.

Some of the grotesque ornaments with which the felons have decorated themselves, in evidence of their indifference to their fate, and of the courage with which they have determined to meet its hard requirements, are now flung aside. Matters are too serious for further jesting. The bitterness of the cup is tasted, and cannot be got rid of by a grimace.

It would be a dolorous story to narrate the events which occur in the wretched transit of the *chaîne* to its appointed goal. Wherever they pass the curious eyes and pitying words, mingled with severer judgments on their sufferings, are directed towards the group, who respond with expressions of suffering, weariness, or indifference to the remarks of the lookers-on. They reach a village—the *chaîne* is stopped—the soldiers are tired. Some have seated themselves on the steps of the *auberge*; many of the *forçats* throw themselves down on the ground, falling asleep in utter exhaustion; the villagers crowd around and offer drink and food to those criminals who appear most interesting or most distressed. Women and children are the busiest in the exercise of benevolence. The men keep apart, discussing the looks, the dress, the supposed offences of the various prisoners. The extremely miserable and the better-clad excite the greatest amount of compassion. Day by day the appearance of the gang becomes more deplorable. The assumed levity has broken down under the intolerable burden of the chain; effrontery has now no aliment for its support; defiance finds no auditory willing to listen to its fierce words; silent, or sighing and groaning, the subdued malefactors go on. At every stage the fatigue becomes more oppressive. The furrows in the brow are deeper—the lips are compressed, and the eyes frequently are closed. There is no pleasure,

whatever there may be of instruction in accompanying these galley-slaves step by step to their place of doom. It would be merely discovering in what seemed the lowest deep of misery a still lower deep, to find that, when the powers of endurance appeared strained to their utmost, something might yet be added; but they reach the *bagne* at last.

We are at Brest. The criminals are chained together in pairs—classified according to the character of their crimes, and subjected to work more or less laborious. From their fetters they are never freed, neither by night nor day. The state of things is thus described by Tocqueville:—"There is not a voice in the country which is not clamorous against the existence of these *bagnes*. They inflict a degrading punishment without imposing terror upon the degraded. They shock every sound notion of justice and penalty, and are but the representatives of a barbarism wholly inefficient for the prevention of crime." When he wrote there were more than 6,000 galley-slaves in Brest, Rochefort, and Toulon. The system could not have endured so long had it been submitted to the tribunal of public opinion. All the inner machinery was a complicated despotism, of which the spy system formed an essential part. The ingenious ways in which the criminals communicated and co-operated with one another; the extraordinary plans of escape (sometimes successful), by which the whole of the community were, on a given day, sworn to combine for aiding the *evasion* of one desperate criminal; the *espionnage* by which it was sought to discover who had been fixed upon and how the flight was to be managed; the dreadful vengeance which was inflicted on any who betrayed the secret, were detailed to me by the governor, and but for his known veracity would have appeared utterly incredible.

But it is my purpose now not to describe the *Bagne de Brest*, to which criminals of the deepest dye were sent, as a whole, but to select from its inmates a few individuals well known in the history of crime, with whom I had the privilege of conversing, and whose narratives were confirmed to me by the attendants and by the authorities of the *bagne*. Each of these men was a personage of importance among his fellows, and each exercised a silent authority which represented the amount of favourable opinion which he enjoyed. I learnt from the governor that his success in keeping anything like order among the criminals depended on his becoming acquainted with the amount of good will and of confidence, or the contrary, which different men possessed. To find any who would serve his purposes without losing their influence with their fellows, or being exposed to distrust or vengeance, was the most difficult part of his administration.

There was a man who was considered the king of highway robbers. I do not know whether he had read the story where the prowess of Gil Blas was put to the test when he was left alone to do a daring deed on the road, while the bandits looked on from the distance to ascertain the amount of pluck which the neophyte would exhibit, but if not the crowning feat of the hero of the *bagnes* was more remarkable. He determined—he alone—to rob a diligence, and he succeeded. At night-fall he

placed a number of sticks through the bushes by the way-side, which had the appearance of muskets and were intended to represent a number of robbers concealed behind. As the diligence approached a voice was heard, as if haranguing a body of men. "Ready!—obey orders!—no firing if there be no resistance—no needless bloodshed!" An armed man walked forth from behind the bushes, stood before the horses, cried out, "Arrestez-vous, conducteur! down! ventre à terre! Comrades, attention! eyes on the alert!" The horses stopped, the postilion and the conductor descended; they lay with their faces in the dirt. The screams of ladies were heard from the carriage. "Ladies, be not afraid, there is no cause for alarm. We are too gallant to do any mischief to the beau sexe. Ladies, no firing!" The robber opened the door of the interior. Besides ladies, there were three military officers, of whom two were colonels, among the passengers. "One at a time, messieurs," and as they came out, one after another surrendered his belongings. "Ventre à terre" was the command given to each. All that they saw in their confusion and in the half darkness, was the musketry pointing at the vehicle; all that was heard were the appeals of the women, the cries for mercy, "Don't hurt us, take all that we have." Assurances were repeated that their lives were safe, the commands were reiterated, "No firing! no firing!" There was not a single passenger who was not lying with his face on the ground when the robber marched away with a gracious "Adieu! messieurs and mesdames," apparently to join the rest of the band. It was some time before any one of the prostrate ventured to raise his head. The first who did so observed the barrels of the muskets still directed menacingly towards them and hid his face in silence. As all noise had ceased, they took courage, a consultation took place, the terrible bushes were approached, the fire-arms were found to be sticks, with nobody near them. The robber was afterwards arrested, a large portion of the property was traced to him, and it was found that he alone had fleeced the whole company. It was said that the officers had their swords with them, and it may be well supposed that many a joke was launched at the spirit they had displayed. No wonder that such a performance should be admired in a community of ruffians, and that such a performer should be looked upon with respect and admiration.

There was another felon whose history was yet more remarkable, for it was one distinguished by a succession of frauds, carried on in high places, and with a success which might have seemed incredible. The man had been brought up in a convent, of which, at the time of the French Revolution, he had become the bursar. He disappeared with all the money which belonged to the brotherhood, and his steps were never traced. Some time afterwards, a person wearing an episcopal dress, and bringing letters of recommendation to the high clergy of one of the remoter provinces, appeared as the Bishop of — (I forget the title) and was received with all the attentions due to his supposed rank. In those days travelling was difficult and tardy, and communications between dis-

tant departments infrequent. His right reverence baptized, married, and buried those whose friends were delighted to have the rites performed by so elevated a dignitary; the confirmations were numerous, and many priests applied to him for ordination, which he graciously conferred. He became the distributor of private and public charity, and had a considerable sum of money in his hands, secured from many sources. One fine morning the Bishop was everywhere sought and nowhere found. Inquiries were instituted and the sad discovery was made that the credentials were forged—that “the Father in God” was “a son of perdition;” that his acts were something worse than invalid; that the most serious consequences to persons and property had resulted from his misdoings, and it was long before the law and the lawyers, the church and its instruments, could repair (and they could only imperfectly repair) the mischief he had wrought. All attempts to discover the mischief-maker failed. Having gathered in his harvest on the ecclesiastical domain, he naturally enough doffed his clerical robes. It was amongst men of business, with letters of introduction and credit—fraudulent, of course—that the adventurer next levied his contributions. There the money-making and the money-watching experience of the mercantile body secured them against any long continuance of successful roguery, especially on a large scale and practised by strangers; so having negotiated bills and obtained money for a considerable amount, the “honourable traveller” had taken himself off before notices of protest had come from the accrediting bankers.

The last and the boldest enterprise of our adventurer led to his capture and to his delivery to the galleys. It was a daring attempt to defraud the military chest of a general of division; and it was in the uniform of a military officer, having all his papers in order, that he presented himself at head-quarters with authority to receive no small sums of money. But whatever knowledge a rogue may possess of the financial machinery which controls the army expenditure of France, and however dexterous and inventive that rogue may be in the concealment of fraud, it is not easy for him suddenly to usurp a position which will enable him to accomplish his fraudulent designs. The extraordinary good fortune of our friend had blinded him to the difficulties of his enterprise. Danton’s advice which, even on the field of politics, is not always successful—“*De l’audace, de l’audace, et toujours de l’audace !*”—has been the reef upon which rascaldom has frequently been wrecked, and there our bishop, merchant, and soldier was—wrecked and ruined.

Of the abbé—who had employed the confessional for the seduction of women, and who had committed many acts of atrocious violence in the indulgence of his passions—of a negro who had committed six or seven murders, “*avec des circonstances de cruauté*”—of the renowned thief who stole the diamonds of *Mademoiselle Mars*, and of others more or less distinguished in the annals of crime—I shall not now speak.

The Holy Gai of Hurdwar.

WHERE the sacred Ganges emerges upon the plains of Hindostan, through a gorge which divides the Sewalik range of hills from the mountains of Kumaon, is situated the town of Hurdwar, at an elevation of 1,024 feet above the sea level, and a distance of 167 miles from the spot where the Bhageerettee first springs to light from beneath its wall of snow. The town is situated on the western bank of the river, which here loses its character of a mountain stream, and spreads out a broad surface as it flows southward through the fertile fields and rice plains of Bijnour and Mozuffernuggur. At this point the stream is peculiarly sacred, for here it enters upon the land it is to bless. No longer pursuing its brawling course among barren rocks, it excites, in the simple Hindoo mind, admiration and gratitude for its beneficence, and fear for its destroying power. Ask not why sentiments so full of the poetry of nature should have lost the elasticity natural to them, and hardened to superstition. The fact is so. Nuleeni launches her little boat on the river, and the light it carries has a greater charm for her than the moonlight sleeping on the waters. To die there is happiness, and the life of a father or mother is less sacred than the waters of the "river-sea." To die at Hurdwar is greater happiness still, for here are the "Hur ki Pyree," the "sacred stairs of Vishnu," by which the spirit ascends to bliss. To Hurdwar, therefore, come numbers of rich Hindoos to pass the remnant of their days, and hither are brought the ashes of the wealthy to be cast on the sacred waters.

Great is the fame of Hurdwar throughout Hindostan. Rich Hindoos, and rajahs who can afford to pay for it, drink no other water but that from the sacred "ghaut." The idol in every large temple is daily bathed in "milk from Gunga's breast," and for this purpose it must come from Hurdwar. To supply these demands, hundreds of pilgrims are constantly on the roads leading to the distant shrine, with the wicker-work baskets which contain the bottles for the holy water, slung on bamboos across their shoulders, and crying out at intervals, "Bom, bom, Mahadeo !" (great, oh, great is Mahadeo), or, more frequently, "Gunga mae ki jye !" (victory to mother Ganges), as they pass along. These merchant pilgrims, if we may call them so, are clever fellows, who contrive to "make the best of both worlds," by combining a spiritual advantage with the temporal one which it is their primary object to secure. A daughter has to be married. The father goes to Hurdwar, and obtains a supply of holy water, which he sells, and thus provides the indispensable dowry. The broken speculator, and the ruined gambler,

find in this pilgrimage a resource which never fails them, and the sacred character of the act is not lessened by the motive which prompts to it.

Besides this constant stream of pilgrims, Hurdwar has its annual gathering in the spring, when, for a certain number of days, the pilgrims religiously perform their ablutions at the sacred ghaut, or stairs leading down to the river. A greater festival, called the "Coombh-Mela," is held every twelfth year, when Jupiter is in the sign of Aquarius, and the water is supposed to be "troubled" by some sacred influence. It is at this critical period that the deepest religious feelings of the people are stirred, and the pilgrimage is believed to be of the highest efficacy. Every village then sends forth its little band of devotees, each man with the bamboo, on which are slung the water-bottles, across his shoulders, and at his back a small wallet. In his left hand are his shoes, and his right is supported by a stout staff. Women, too, are of the party, and are similarly equipped. When all are thus prepared, last words are spoken to those left behind, and last embraces are exchanged. Then with a shout of "Gunga mae ki jye!" the little party set forth on their walk of five hundred miles or more, distance being as little regarded by the Hindoo pilgrim as by the Christian devotee in the middle ages, who toiled footsore to Jerusalem from the remotest parts of Europe. Step by step the pilgrims go patiently on, as the sun rises slowly over their heads. At mid-day his beams are too powerful even for those who have lived under them from childhood, and they seek the friendly shade of a mango "tope," in the midst of which some long-since departed benefactor of his race has sunk a well. A draught of fresh water, a little parched rice or gram taken from their "cummerbunds," make their frugal mid-day meal, after disposing of which the wayfarers lie down and sleep. An hour or two has passed, when one of them awakens and sees that the shadows of the trees have begun to lengthen, while the village at which they purpose to rest for the night is still many miles distant. He arouses his companions, and once more they gird up their loins and proceed on their way. By-and-by perhaps they meet a returning band of pilgrims, with whom they exchange shouts of "Gunga mae ki jye," and "Bom, bom, Mahadeo." The sun has sunk, and the short twilight has faded away; they have seen the jackal leave his lair, and a wolf has crossed their path ere they reach the distant village.

The humble encampment is again pitched in a grove of mango-trees, or under some wide-spreading banian. The pilgrim's first care is to choose a spot of ground on which to prepare the meal of the day. This spot he cleans, and then sprinkles with water, both to cool it and purify it. In its centre he digs a small hole, on each side of which he places a stone or a brick, and thus speedily constructs a primitive fireplace. Most likely he has brought some dry flour with him; but if not he procures it from the village, and kneads it into a paste with the addition of a little water. He then goes to the well, and performs his ablutions, for without doing so no orthodox Hindoo can sit down to eat. On his return he kindles the fire, which he had previously prepared, and balance-

ing a small iron plate on the bricks, he forms the kneaded flour into cakes, and bakes them on it. These, with the addition of a little oil, or rancid butter, compose his dinner nine days out of ten. On the tenth he treats himself to more sumptuous fare. He goes to the village, and for half-a-dozen cowries* purchases a handful of greens; a similar sum is laid out on an additional quantity of oil or rancid butter; for a single cowrie he gets a chili, and another provides him with salt. With these simple materials he cooks himself a curry, which altogether has cost him about a penny. The well affords him his only drink.

It is night, and the large, bright Indian moon sheds her silvery light over the waving corn-fields. The ringing of bells, and the bellowing of the sacred conch, is no longer heard from the little temple by the side of the tank. All is silent, save when the dismal cry of the jackal comes wailing across the fields. The quilts of the pilgrims are spread on the ground in the open air. "Hookahs" are lighted, and they lazily watch the smoko as they sit or recline on their lowly couches. This is to them the happiest of the twenty-four hours. Wearied, they are resting; instead of the mid-day heat and the fierce glare of the sun, they are solaced by the coolness of night and the soft light of the moon. They have enjoyed what is to them the chiefest of earthly pleasures, and are about to enjoy what is second to it alone: they have eaten, and they are about to sleep. In the meanwhile, they beguile the time in a manner peculiar to lands where, as Moore tells us, the cypress and myrtle are emblems of the people's passionate deeds.

The story-teller has always been a person of much importance in the East. He is always a welcome companion, and seldom need trouble himself to provide tobacco for his hookah. Of course he knows his story by heart, and his custom is to make a pause at the close of every sentence, when the audience is expected to give some audible proof of attention to his words. Hear him on the present occasion:—"And so the king's daughter, the narcissus-eyed Pudmani, tall and stately as the cypress-tree, with her lips like the pomegranate-blossom, her fingers like pencils of silver, her whole face like the moon—adorned at every point, with silver bells on her toes, and a gold teeka on her forehead, went forth all alone into that terrible wilderness."

"Han bhaee!" (yes, brother!) cries one of his attentive listeners, and the hookahs go hubble-bubble, and the story proceeds.

"And she went on, and on, and on, till she came to a broad roaring river."

"Han bhaee!"

"And as she stood by the brink, from the forest behind her came forth a terrible voice, which made the earth shake, and all the trees tremble with fear."

"Han bhaee!"

* A cowrie is in value about the hundredth part of a farthing.

"And there came out from the forest the terrible giant Rawun, sixty feet in height, his mouth like a cavern, his teeth like the tusks of elephants, his eyes like flames of fire, and his hair hanging round his head as if serpents covered it."

"Han bhaee !"

"And when Pudmani saw the terrible giant coming towards her, she wrung her hands and wept, for there was no boat on the river ; and as the giant shrieked and came yet closer and clashed his teeth at her, she was about to throw herself into the rapid stream, when lo ! a lotus flower with large leaves spreading round it, floated up to her feet and said, 'Come,' and she stepped on to it, and was carried safely across."

At this point of the story a hearty response is given by the listeners, who have hung breathlessly on the speaker's words. They have been deeply moved by the situation of the heroine. Their sensations are similar to ours, when, reading a novel, we find the noble heroine in a critical position. The contrivances by which the Indian story-teller extricates his heroine, are, however, much more simple than those which are allowed to the European novelist. Physical dangers and physical contrivances of the simplest kind for their relief, are as yet his chief stock-in-trade.

And so the tale goes on as the moon ascends higher in the heavens, and the silence of the night deepens. The responses of the weary pilgrims become fainter and fainter at each pause of the story ; at last they cease altogether, and the story-teller, with one long pull at his hookah, sinks back to rest.

Day after day the pilgrims continue their journey, with little or no variation in the incidents, till at last they see from a distance the little temple on the top of the hill of Chunda Devi, opposite Hurdwar, and a few hours' more walking brings them into the streets of the sacred town. Here they worship in each of the temples in succession, and have their heads shaved, and bathe and purify themselves in the waters at the sacred ghaut. Their bottles are filled, and the seal of one of the guardian priests is affixed in order to prove the genuineness of the water. This done, they start on the return journey to their distant home.

Sometimes the pilgrimage is undertaken for religious reasons only ; to wash away the guilt of some sin, or to obtain some particular blessing, or in fulfilment of a vow. A peasant has caused the death of a cow, and he must go to Hurdwar, however distant his home may be, to remove the fatal stain, and avert the wrath to come. Or—deepest of crimes—he has struck a priest, and he has been condemned to measure the distance to Hurdwar with his body. He starts on this painful journey by placing his head on the threshold of his hut, and his heels in the road ; he then puts his head where his heels were, and stretches himself along the road again ; and so on to the end, till his feet rest on the stones of the sacred ghaut. Or the pilgrim is a rich man, who accompanies his wife to Hurdwar, to see if they cannot force from the reluctant Fates the blessing of a son. Or,

he may have been sick unto death, and has vowed in the hour of his extremity, that should the hand of the grim king be stayed for this time, he would prove his gratitude by a pilgrimage to Hurdwar. These, and a hundred similar motives, influence the pilgrims at all times. But it is in the twelfth year, at the time of the great fair, that the people crowd to Hurdwar by thousands from all parts of India, impelled by a feeling of devotion verging on fanaticism, or by the mixed motives of which all partake.

From Bengal and from Guzerat, from the Punjaub, and from Oude they come to rid themselves of the burden of their sins, or to deliver themselves from some bodily ailment; they come to buy and to sell; they come because it is the one period of excitement in the dull annual round of their lives. It is calculated that more than a hundred thousand people assemble together at Hurdwar every year, and this number is doubled, or even trebled, in the year of the jubilee.

There is an old English proverb which tells us,—

Men speak of the fair,
As things went with them there,

and it is thus I mean to speak of the Great Fair of Hurdwar, and the pilgrims on the road, from my own experience. The route by which myself and friends travelled was thronged with people, and all along it was the appearance of a moving fair. We pitched our tents each night close by the side of the road. Every morning we were awakened long before we thought it right to leave our beds, by the hum of the passing multitude. When, some hours afterwards, we seated ourselves in night attire at the doors of our tents, in order to enjoy the peculiarly Indian meal of the "chota huzree," or small breakfast, in the open air, the whole of the people of India seemed to be passing in procession before us. The short, sturdy Jat, the Rajpoot, the wild-looking Marwaree, the full-bearded Sikh, and the Guzeratee, in flowing garments, go by, as in a ceaseless stream. They pass on their way in every kind of vehicle; in the rattling bhylee; the stately rath (a kind of sedan-chair on wheels); in easy-going palanquins; or in the humble hackery. They go by on horses, on camels, and on elephants. Some merry men are riding on bullocks, which also carry all their bed and baggage, that is to say, the single quilt on which they sleep, and the brass pot out of which they eat. Here come a group of Zemindars from Oude, on their prancing mares, whose manes are plaited, and their tails tied up in knots, and their legs coloured. Following them is a large party of the wild-looking natives of Bikaner, and Jessalmeer, with their long strings of camels, the swift ships of their own desert homes. The men generally walk, the children and some of the women sit in the small square kujawar (a framework of wood, with sides of strong network), which are hung on each side of the camels. But most of the women are seated astride on the great slouching beasts, and look most picturesque in their peg-top trowsers, with the "chudder," or veil, which they wear in common with all native women, falling gracefully from the top of the long, upright horn into which they

twist their hair. In nothing is the suppleness of the Hindoostanee more strikingly shown than in the small space in which he can sit. Here is a bhylee, a rude vehicle without springs, and with a single square seat. One Englishman would require all the space it affords for his easy accommodation, or if two could be crowded on it they must be of slender make. Yet as it trundles by, we may be sure there are seven or eight natives packed in it. The wheel comes off a covered hackery in the road, just in front of our tent. Its inmates are obliged to get out, and therein present to us a marvellous spectacle. It is like seeing a juggler take a score of small coins, hundreds of buttons, and thousands of yards of tape, all from his mouth. First, eight or ten infants are carefully lifted out; then ten or eleven little children come tumbling down; seven or eight grown-up boys and girls blithely follow; five or six grown-up women step forth: and last of all, two or three very aged women are helped out. During the clearing out of the hackery, it is amusing to watch the behaviour of the lady inmates when exposed to the gaze of the bystanders. The middle-aged matrons, as they come out, are very careful to draw their veils with practised hands round their faces, so that no strange eye shall view their charms. The young maidens come forth giggling, and in spite of the care of their mothers, manage somehow to give us frequent glimpses of their light brown cheeks and sloe-black eyes. The old women, as they prepare to descend, begin to make much fuss about the adjustment of their veils, but are dragged forth unceremoniously by their male relatives. We ourselves are objects of great curiosity to many of the passers-by, especially to those from the native States, or from our own outlying provinces. A party of the unsophisticated sons of the desert from Rajpootana leave the road, and march quietly up to our party to examine us more closely. "That is a fine man," they say, pointing to our friend H——, who is large-bearded and has a broad chest. They look with much astonishment and amusement at our Highland friend McP——, whose hair and whiskers are of a fiery hue. "Look! look!" they say, "his hair is all red!" And they laugh loudly, not in scorn, but from surprise. "He is a very nice-looking boy," they say, pointing to your humble servant, who has, alas! left the golden days of boyhood far behind him, and has a face smooth as Jacob's. "They wear puggies, too!" exclaims one, pointing to the rolls of cloth wound round our hats. We excuse their curiosity when we learn that we are the first white-faced men they have ever seen. We think it a distinction to have first presented the English face to them, and only hope that our countenances have done credit to our country and race.

It is a strange and novel sight, that streaming multitude, and, taken in this way, there is an element of greatness in it. But the details are poor and insignificant. Men are passing in thousands, but they are mostly dirty and half-clad barbarians. We begin to tire of the sight, and to reflect that the aggregate of a barbarian population, however large, is but barbarian still. Sometimes, though but seldom, in the midst of the ragged

and dirty crowd, a rajah passes with a large following, and makes a show which may be called splendid. He is mounted on a large elephant, with housings of gold and having a silver howdah on its back; eight or nine other elephants come behind splendidly caparisoned, moving with their slow, solemn steps, while the bells which are hung at their sides clang loudly, and peacocks' tails flash in the sun as they are waved over the heads of the rajah and his followers. Behind come camels with velvet saddh cloths bealing the "nakara," or royal drum, and richly-caparisoned led horses. Before the procession run the mace-bearers with maces of silver, and before it and behind it and around it are foot-soldiers with spears and matchlocks, and horsemen with sword and shield and lance. All this, with the bright colours of the different dresses and the bright sun shining on it, makes up a gallant show. But the spectacle is generally spoiled by its accessories. Behind the procession comes a following of the veriest "tag-rag and bob-tail:" men, dirty and half-clad, trudging along through the dust or mounted on small ragged ponies, or big, half-starved horses.

At length we reach Hurdwar and pitch our tents in a grove of trees in the valley of the Doon and close by the edge of the river. In the morning we go out to see the Fair. Four or five of us climb on to the back of the elephant which a paternal government allows me as a part of my official retinue. For viewing a fair or getting through a crowd there is nothing like an elephant. From the elevation of his back you can see everything clearly, and you win your way safely and surely through the densest mass of people. As we move along how spirit-stirring is the *coup d'œil* of the town, the river, and all the swarming multitude! How carefully Behemoth picks his way! He is an object of intense curiosity to numbers of the people. Some come up and try to touch him. Others bow down and salute him reverentially—Guneish, the god of wisdom, being made in the image of the most sagacious of beasts. As we approach the sacred town, strange sounds fill the air, and looking upwards, we see that the whole of the hill-side above us is pierced with temple chambers, hewn out of the solid rock, to which the worshippers are climbing by means of ladders. In these little temples the sacred drum is being beaten and the holy conch-shell blown; there is also a great ringing of bells and clashing of cymbals in addition to the hum of the vast multitude. We make our way with difficulty here, for the road is cut out of the hill-side, and is thronged with people. Our slow progress is far from agreeable. The air is full of flies. The backs of some of the men in the crowd below us are literally black with the swarms which have settled on them. The sun is hot, even at this early hour, and a rank odour rises up from the steaming multitude. Happy in our comparative immunity, we at last win our way to the entrance of the town, opposite the sacred ghaut. This is not the time to visit the ghaut, however. The sun is shining full on the sacred river, and the crowd is dense. So we turn into a by-street to see what is passing elsewhere.

We pass by long lines of confectioners' shops, in which the sweetmeats

are piled up in all sorts of fantastic shapes. The appearance of these delicacies, and the odour from them, however, are anything but inviting. The chief articles cooked seem to be small round wheaten cakes, which are thrown into huge cauldrons of boiling oil, and then hooked out and sold on leaves to the crowding customers. We pass by shops filled with articles in brass in every shape and size. As the Hindoos always eat and drink from vessels of brass, the braziers' art is a most important one in India. We pass by shops filled with skull-caps of muslin, lace, and velvet of every colour, and highly ornamented with tinsel; and near them are heaps of scarlet and green shoes, embroidered with tinsel or gold. Here we see the money-changer sitting square-legged on his carpet, with his heap of rupees, pice, and cowries spread out before him. Here, heaped up against a wall, is a great pile of sugar-canes, the proprietor of which is chopping them into pieces small enough to put into the mouth, with a machine like a chaff-cutter: these succulent morsels seem to be in great demand. Here is a lapidary's shop, in which are heaps of uncut stones of every kind, from garnets to rubies, and marble and soap-stone cut into all those beautiful and fantastic shapes, and inlaid with all that wonderful delicacy and just assortment of colours, for which the Indian stone-cutter is famous. We stop here and purchase a very pretty little marble paper-weight, with a wreath of flowers inlaid in coloured stones on it, and a most elaborately carved card-tray in soap-stone. Further on we see a silversmith, with his primitive stock-in-trade, consisting of a small portable furnace, a blowpipe, a small hammer, and a pair of pincers, busily engaged in making earrings and nose-rings on the spot for the female customers who surround him. Here is a cook-shop, in which kabobs are being roasted on long skewers before bright charcoal fires; we see lumps of meat lying about, and we see a cat, and we see flies, and we do not care to look again. Here is a grocer's shop, in which are heaped up grain and pulse of every kind,—great lumps of salt, red, white, and black, and from which comes forth an overpowering smell of assafetida, a favourite condiment with the Hindoos. Here is a shop filled up with the bulbous-looking bottles in which the holy water is carried away, and with the rings of coloured glass which the native women love to wear on their wrists and ankles. Here is a shop full of bamboo staves for the pilgrims, before which our friend S—— compels us to stop till he has chosen a couple of nice, well-balanced, nut-brown shillelaha, he having a fancy for such articles. Here is a shop filled with European goods, that is to say, with packets of needles, and hooks and eyes, and bundles of thread, and penknives, and beads, and boxes of lucifer matches, and such like small articles which seem to attract a very large number of customers. Thus, observing and observed, we thread our way through the crowded street, now and then rousing the small pony of some fat gentleman from the country, to the extreme discomfort of the rider, who, is often startled from his seat. As we emerge from the town we cannot help thinking of the poverty of the display of merchandise we have left behind us. Nothing

could more truly express the real poverty of the country which writers of the olden time have been pleased to extol for its magnificence and wealth. All that we have seen in our ramble through Hurdwar is hardly worth 500*l*. It is true, some of the more valuable articles are not exposed for sale : they never are in India, where plate-glass is as yet unknown. If you want Delhi jewellery, or precious stones, or Cashmere shawls, you must make your way into the enclosed serais, where the jewellers or shawl-merchants are putting up, or send for them to your tent. But the value of these goods, added to that of the property in the bazaar, would amount to no great sum. The wealth of India is not spread abroad among the people. It all tends to accumulate in a few great treasuries.

Hurdwar is renowned as a horse mart, and, during the holy fair, large numbers of horses and mares are brought there for sale, but more of the latter than the former. Owing to the want of skill on the part of the natives, the horses are generally vicious, while the country-bred mares are much valued by Europeans. They are swift, active, and enduring, and being fast trotters are in particular request for driving ; they are also excellent fencers. Allowed to run loose when young about the villages in which they are bred, they are continually leaping the hedges and enclosures, and thus acquire great flexibility of limb. More care also is taken of them, owing to the great demand there is for them to mount the Indian irregular cavalry regiments. The annual visits of cavalry officers to the Fair of Hurdwar, on "remount duty," is the cause of large numbers of these mares being brought together.

Proceeding to a plain outside the town, where all the horses are picketed in the open air, we dismount from our elephant, and make our way on foot between the lines. There are about two thousand animals in the market. In one corner is an Arab merchant, who has brought up a string of "Arabs" from Bombay, including one or two of very high caste. These stalwart beasts to the right have been brought from Cabool and the neighbourhood of Peshawur ; these to the left are "Persian horses," delicate and slender-limbed, with silky manes and tails. Runjeet Singh, the Lion of Lahore, was very fond of this species of horse, and the breed seems to have become indigenous in the Punjab. Our party make various purchases. I buy a mare for 15*l*., which afterwards turned out capable of doing fourteen miles an hour in harness, and did excellent work for me for many years, never getting "sick or sorry." H—— buys a pony for 6*l*., which was never fit for much ordinary work, being too vicious, but which afterwards became famous at many a spring meeting as "Billy the Jumper."

The native gentleman's idea of a horse is very different from that of an Englishman. His chief criterion of merit is the difference between the height of his shoulder from the ground, and of the bottom of the belly, also measured from the ground. A Hindoo very seldom gallops a horse ; he prefers the amble ; the trot is quite unknown. A rich native certainly never lets his horse do anything under him but amble. He

keeps the animal principally for show, and likes him big and fat. These are the chief points he looks to, and there are many horses in the fair prepared for this class of customer. The native horse-dealer is quite as learned as his English brother in the arts of feeding up a horse and concealing his age. He knows how to "cocker him up," and file his teeth, for the benefit of his European customers or of other dealers in horses of his own nation ; but for the rich native customer he has resort to other devices. So far as the horse is concerned, he has merely to make him as gross as a prize ox. But he must also address himself to the vanity and childishness of his rich fellow-countryman. He pickets the horse on a raised platform, and puts a gorgeous canopy over him. He envelopes him in rich clothing, so that only his hoofs and ears are visible. He gives out that the horse is not to be sold under 10,000 rupees. He will not exhibit him to any one under the degree of a rajah. Passing near one of these platforms and its canopy of scarlet cloth, and seeing a crowd gathered near, we pause to see what is going on. A young rajah has come to look at the horse. The numerous coverings are removed with ostentatious care. There stands revealed a great, big, dun-coloured beast, with pink nose and white eyes, and four white feet ; the latter regarded by the natives as a great mark of beauty. His head is tied down to his chest by a martingale of thick, strong cloth ; his mane is plaited, and dyed yellow ; his legs are also dyed yellow, and his tail is coloured in alternate rings of yellow and red. The poor animal is dull with over-feeding, and has most likely been stuffed with butter and sugar that very morning, but a sharp pull is given to the cruel bit in his mouth, and he begins to prance up and down as he stands. Five thousand rupees is his price. He is not worth so much as the Arab pony for which you gave 500 rupees. We hear that the young rajah has bought him for 2,500 rupees.

We remount our elephant and pass on by the noble works at the head of the great Ganges Canal, to the river side, and then turn again towards Hurdwar. We are here more favourably placed for observing the humours of the Fair than in the crowded streets of the town. The moving mass is gay with the brilliant colours of the "puggries" or turbans, and the "chudders" or large veils of the women. The brightest greens, yellows, blues, and reds flash in the golden sunlight. Magenta and solferino are colours which have long been known in India, and their brilliancy is quite remarkable. Look at that turban of the brightest crimson, and that other close by of the most ethereal blue ! Their children, too, are dressed out in the gayest colours : a crimson jacket and green trowsers, both covered with gold embroidery, is a common combination ; and as, at the same time, they have on their heads crimson skull-caps, and on their feet bright yellow shoes, both thickly covered with tinsel, the little fellows make a glittering show in the bright sunlight. Large groups of them are gathered round the merry-go-rounds, which are so numerous that the air is filled with their creaking. Men go by with dancing bears and performing goats ; yonder fellows, with cobras

twined round their necks and hanging from their arms, are snake-charmers. Here, too, is a party of nautch-girls performing on a raised wooden platform in the open air. Faquirs in leopard-skins and tiger-skins may be seen everywhere scattered through the crowd : when they are not quite naked, their dress generally consists of half a cocoanut-shell, and a piece of string. These fat, lazy, filthy, sensuous beasts are the curse of India, and the sooner the inhabitants of that country do away with their "native clergy" the better it will be for them. Rich bankers go by in huge "ruths" superbly ornamented, hung round with bells, and drawn by magnificent bullocks. You would covet the Cashmere shawls in which these sumptuous personages are wrapped, my lady reader ! Closely shut in and closely guarded palanquins pass us carrying down native ladies of rank to the river side, or to one of the numerous temples we have already noticed. In this cage a tiger is being exhibited ; we passed a rhinoceros a short time ago ; and we are told that somewhere in the fair a wild ass from Thibet is on show. Here is a group of wild Tartars performing a grotesque sort of dance. Round them are their pretty white goats on which they have brought down borax from their mountain homes, and on which they will take back their return loads of salt. How many different races of men do we see around us. There is the Guzeratee, with long straight nose and fair handsome face—the great bankers of India. Here is the short Jat, the yeoman of Northern India, whose hand is equally ready and strong at the plough or the sword. The Bengalee, with jet-black face and supple limbs, shown by almost transparent muslin garments, glides softly by, his panther-like movements making a strong contrast with the long firm stride of the tall and stately Rajpoot. Here is the Sikh with his flowing beard and martial countenance, the tall and square-shouldered Pathan from Rohilcund, the heavily built, coarse-looking Marwarce. Here is the largely-built Afghan with his Jewish face and shaggy locks, his long coat and baggy trowsers, both inexpressibly dirty, and the Tartar with his flat face, large mouth, and almond-shaped porcine eyes ; his strange garments made up entirely of pieces of blanket held together by wooden skewers, and on his head a curiously-shaped cap like that which the Liberator O'Connell adopted for his crown. But who is this that comes shouldering his way through the crowd, and before whom the people give way with so much deference ? His garments are of a yellow earthen colour and exceedingly dirty, and on his head is a structure like Minerva's helmet out of shape, upon which seem to have settled a flight of gaudy insects. He belongs to that race which now holds the foremost place in the world, and a mere handful of whom have conquered, and firmly hold under their sway, the vast territory which has given birth to these swarming myriads. In short, this is young Jones going down to the river to fish. Behind him are carried his rods, and the glittering bait of flies has been conveniently fixed in his hat.

The principal street leading to the sacred stairs is filled with a dense crowd, but our servants make a lane for us, and we presently find our-

selves in the balcony of the small temple which flanks the stairs on the right, and in which is the shrine of the river goddess herself. This balcony partly overhangs both the stairs and the river, so that from it we have a full view of the whole process of ablution. In the times of the native kings, the "Hur ki Pyree" was so steep, narrow, and tortuous, that numbers of people used to be crushed to death on it during the fair-time every year. In 1820, more than four hundred people were smothered or trampled to death in this terrible descent, or forced down into the river below and drowned. The English Government then took the matter in hand. The passage was opened out and widened, and a broad and easy flight of steps laid down. This was done by a party of sappers and miners, under command of Captain D. Bude, whose pretty house still stands on the hill above Hurdwar. Thus the Hindoo's Gate to Heaven was made wide for him by English engineers; he slips on the pathway to bliss over stones laid down by English hands, and clamped with English iron. More recently, our irrepressible countrymen have interfered with the sacred ghaut in a manner which has produced a great and radical change in the ceremony itself. But of this by-and-by.

From our position in the balcony of the little temple, we look down upon an eager crowd on the steps below. At the foot of the stairs are wooden platforms, extending some way into the river, and raised a few inches above its surface. On each of these sits a priest. During the rest of the year it is the business (in every sense of the word) of these priests to set the seal on the mouths of the bottles of holy water, which attest its genuineness. Now, they set the seal on the purified pilgrims. After each devotee has immersed himself as often as he thinks necessary in the sacred water, he comes up to the edge of one of these platforms. The priest, taking his left hand, fills the hollow of the palm with water, while he mutters a prayer, and then makes a sacred mark on the bather's forehead, between the eyes, with colouring matter, which he keeps for that purpose in a small brass dish. For all this the pilgrim has of course to make a suitable pecuniary return, and from our "coigne of vantage" we see how the rival priests fight and struggle for the cleansed sinners! Here is an old woman who has unfortunately got between two platforms which stand close together. She is darted at as two crows dart at a bone. She is dragged this way and that way, and both the priests make dabs at her forehead with the sacred colour, till the poor creature is so hustled that she has hardly any breath left in her withered body. I should have mentioned that all along the lowest step of the sacred stairs, sit the barbers, who shave the heads and faces of the intending bathers. This is the first act in all ceremonies of purification among the Hindoos.

Yonder is a pious father, who has managed to bring the whole of his family down to the water's edge. He is evidently very severe in his principles. See how vigorously he plunges his little boys in the sacred stream, how utterly he disregards their cries and struggles. What! do the little wretches not want their sins to be washed away? Is their bodily dis-

comfort for a few moments to be compared in importance with their purification from sinful taint? Once more they are vigorously plunged in the water, and are at length laid half-drowned and flaccid on the lowest step.

Mark how calmly the old women throw off the greater part of their clothing as they approach the water's brink, and how briskly they step into it. Not so the young girls, to whom this is an awful ceremony, with the vast crowd around them, and the sacred river beneath, which is to wash away their sins, and give them rich husbands and a numerous progeny. The old ladies have got accustomed to the scene, and their fate, as regards husband and children, has been decided long ago. The peccadilloes of their calm-blooded old age hardly amount to sins. They may wish to wash away the taint of these even; but as they jump and plunge about in the stream, they evidently enjoy the coolness of the water, whether conscious or not of its spiritual virtue.

It is a strange scene, these thousands of human beings wrapt in a delusive hope, and as insensible to the voice of reason as the stone and brass from which they fashion their idols. It was stranger still a few years ago, when the propitious moment for bathing was limited to the stroke of the hour, and revealed to the priests alone, who proclaimed it to the assembled throng. Among those assembled thousands, how many there were who stood the night through in momentary expectation of the fateful summons. The sick crowded down to the water's edge to be ready to slip in at the joyful moment. The lame lay down on the lowest step of the sacred stairs, ready to roll themselves in. Palsied men and lepers, and men who were sick unto death, were held in the arms of loving relatives ready to be plunged into the water, and drawn forth strong and healthy, and full of life. Rich men went down with their retainers, and possessed themselves of the best places by force. The whole of the vast multitude was swayed as one mass by the master passions of hope and fear. Oh! but to catch that one propitious moment of the year! To be freed from the haunting remorse of sin, from the dread agony of disease, many had dragged themselves to Hurdwar over hundreds of weary miles, with the cold shadow of the king of terrors pressing closer and closer every hour of their pilgrimage; this moment lost, and the shadow of his wings would be upon them indeed. What a picture might be drawn by a capable hand of passions that worked in the hearts of that expectant multitude as it lay on the banks of the sacred river; what passionate hope, what trembling anxiety, what racking expectation! But the hour has struck at last: there is a sudden booming of guns, the bells clang out from the temples, and the bellowing dissonance of the "conch" shells fill the air. Then the frenzied expectation breaks forth, and the pent-up passions have full play. A great cry rises up from the people, and there is the sound of the rushing of thousands of feet.

All this has been, but it is so no longer. When the sacred movement upon the river, or "troubling of the waters," was confined to a single

moment of time, that branch of the Ganges which runs by the "Hur ki Pyree" was so shallow as to be fordable. The pilgrims used then to rush down the sacred steps, and, plunging without hesitation into the water, wade through to the opposite bank. Since the construction of the Ganges Canal the channel has deepened, and, as a consequence, the bathers, instead of crossing the stream, are compelled to return up the sacred stairs. To prevent the terrible confusion and loss of life that would be certain to ensue if the divine influence were confined to a single moment of time, the priests have wisely spread it over a whole day; and so the concentrated frenzy of the great Coombh fair, the sudden rush of thousands at the auspicious instant, the struggle, the trampling to death, and the despairing cry, are things no longer to be witnessed, though they once formed its most striking feature.

Yet the scene is strange and sad still, and perhaps the reader, no less than myself, has had enough of it. One more incident of the Holy Fair, however, is needed to complete my sketch. Looking down from the balcony, I see a man fight his way to one of the priests. He gives a small packet into his hands. Fold after fold of cloth is removed by the priest. At length he comes to a small inner packet, which he opens carefully, and drops from it a white powder on to the stone step before him. He spreads out the powder, handling it with peculiar care. He takes a piece of money from it; he then says some prayers over it, and finally washes it away into the sacred river.

"What is that powder?" I ask of a native behind me.

"His father's ashes," he answers, pointing to the pilgrim. If a man cannot die on the banks of the sacred river, his next great wish is that his ashes may be cast into it.

The shadows of the hill above us now fall deeper on the river. The forests of the Doon are beginning to look black in the distance; closer and more eager is the rush to the water, as the sacred day begins to draw to its close. Not to me are these waters sacred, and no moral taint of mine can they wash away. So I turn away and hasten to my tent, to be in time for dinner. With what different feelings do I and the multitude around me regard the close of the "Holy Day!"

A Few Thoughts on Keys.

—♦—
 Now—this key was a fairy.—*History of Blue Beard.*

It must be a flinty heart that can read without a sympathetic throb one of those plaintive advertisements, often seen in the second column of *The Times'* supplementary sheet, which offer lavish sums of comparatively valueless gold for the restoration of "A bunch of keys, on a steel ring." Those simple words touch a key-note which finds an echo in every bosom, not utterly destitute of feeling,—and cupboards.

The wise and witty Sydney Smith instituted a "screaming-gate," at the verge of his parochial demesne, for the purpose of allowing due scope and expansion to the peculiar distress attending it; and, indeed, no family should be without some appropriate "wailing-place" of this sort; some monumental portal, or liminary grove, sacred to memory and the *Dii Viales* who are said to preside over luggage.

Although this particular misery is common to all, yet, for *man's* grosser nature, there are certain mitigations and tender assuagements (which his partner cannot share), that soften, if they do not remove, the sense of bereavement. He can kick his portmanteau, if he cannot open it; he can rip up and disembowel his carpet-bag; he can smash his despatch-box. Above all, *he can swear!* A hearty oath has been known to take the sting out of many such sorrows; it enters into the category of what are called "resources within one's self," and, as such, should not be altogether neglected.

But in the case of hapless woman, these safety-valves for legitimate emotion do not exist. In her keyless agony, she is like a lioness robbed of her cubs, yet denied the alleviation of a roar. Moreover, the amount of misery entailed on the two sexes by this loss admits of no comparison. Man has but a limited capacity of suffering, inasmuch as he is a creature of few keys. He probably possesses but *le stricto nécessaire*,—let us say, a latch-key, a watch-key, a desk-key, (perhaps) a cellaret-key; mere bagatelles. Woman, on the other hand,—especially woman of a methodical turn—is all keys. Not to mention that congeries of cares—the domestic bunch—she has all sorts of outlying and isolated keys; keys in *partibus infidelium*; colonial and collateral keys; keys that lock out, and lock in, and lock up—everything lockable—especially keys: which are in themselves susceptible of captivity, *custodes custodiunt*. When that fatal complication takes place, it is impossible to sound the depths of a woman's keylessness.

Thoughtless persons look upon keys in a merely subjective point of

view—as suggestive of and subordinate to locks. “Under lock and key” is the usual careless way of speaking, putting (as it were) the cart before the horse. Persons of an analytic turn and discursive fancy will overleap the true object of reflection; they will wander from the matter in hand—the key, shut their eyes upon its concomitant, the key-hole, and, disdaining to linger even in that mediate region, the press, cupboard, closet, cellar, or store-room, under their bodily eyes, will mount (metaphorically) from shelf to shelf, till they lose themselves in bewildered contemplation of finite man’s infinite faculties of acquisitiveness and retentiveness.

The antiquarian, again, will busy himself with the question—When did man first begin to lock up? “When wild in woods the noble savage ran,” of course he carried no keys; a stone rolled to a cavern’s mouth was probably the first rough expression of an art which has been so finely elaborated in later days. Boulders must have been precious stones in that golden age, when the rarity of property so simplified the duties and cares of possession.

The Greeks and Romans must have had but sorry methods of guarding their possessions. Would Grecian Aristippus have strewn the Libyan sands with his gold, when his over-burdened slaves found it too heavy for a hurried journey,—would miser Chremes have buried his money in the earth,—if either of them had possessed at home some decent lock-up place, or civilized strong-box? Who ever saw a Pompeiian cellar-key? Rusty nails from that locality are to be met with in museums, but where are the keys that guarded their curious vintages? Horace certainly uses the expression *servata centum clavibus*, but it is evidently a figure of speech, in honour of his friend Posthumus’s genteel establishment; he never mentions the thing as in use in his own cozy bachelor household. Indeed, it puzzles one to guess how he managed about these matters. The Sabine *vin ordinaire* was probably left about in careless profusion; and it is possible that his Chian hogsheads may have been occasionally “on tap” in the atrium, as pipes of claret used to be in hospitable Irish drawing-rooms fifty or sixty years ago; but how about all that “choice Falernian” and “hoarded Cæcuban?” Pitching and plastering the mouths of the vessels was but a poor expedient. What was to prevent the abstraction of a fat amphora or two, if that ubiquitous “boy” of his had any taste for “care-dispelling Massic?”

But this is a digression. The *uses* of keys are no worthy subject for the true philosopher’s contemplation; he looks upon the essences of things; he sees a key in its objective signification; he cares not for its qualifications as arbiter and agent of those vain attributes, “mine and thine;” he takes no interest in futile distinctions. He never locks anything up—knowing the inutility and peril of the act; it adds nothing to the security of property, but is apt to inspire others with too strong an interest in it. “Nothing venture, nothing have,” is his favourite proverb, but with a more enlightened signification than it generally conveys. He looks upon a key as a mystic entity of diabolical powers—a talisman

which can confer on inert matter, such as wood, iron, brass, leather, &c., the faculty of baffling and circumventing you in the effort to get at your own possessions.

This is, in fact, the only sound view of the subject. When once the mind has recognized this truth, every single key on your bunch will assume a peculiar physiognomy, even as it possesses a distinct idiosyncrasy. One key will come into your family with a certain malicious glitter about it—a defiant swagger and sparkle, that foretells the life-long struggle you are destined to have with it; you see at once that it will “rather bend than break,” and rather break than open your box, desk, drawer, or portfolio, as the case may be. Another will wear a dull and gloomy air—a “here to-day and gone to-morrow” sort of aspect, as good as an epitaph and much more veracious.

House-door keys have been seen of so truculent and forbidding a countenance, that their very presence in the lock is supposed to have scared away the prowling depredator; one, indeed, has been known—on a remarkable occasion—to have “comprehended an auspicious person,” and to have done good service in the capacity of a life-preserver.

What family has not, at times, possessed some meek little tea-caddy or perhaps cellaret key, which, however facile and effectual at other times, was liable—in any sudden exigency—to fall into so painful a state of hamper and embarrassment, as no effort of its owner could soothe, or politely feigned indifference on the part of visitors allay?

What household but has its own legendary reminiscences of keys strangely lost and mysteriously regained?—keys that have gone and *hung themselves* (for no human agency is ever traceable on these occasions) on wrong rings, and wandered madly into wrong pockets? Impulsive keys, that have been found apparently trying to open wrong locks of their own accord, and have broken short off in the effort to recover themselves? Industrious keys, which, on some favourable occasion, have so “improved the shining hour,” that wax has been found in their wards. Precious keys (of tills and iron safes), each fondly supposed, by its possessor, to be as unique of its kind as the silver decadrachm of Alexander the Great, yet suddenly discovered to have twin brothers as experienced as themselves in the duties of their office.

The most careless observer will have been struck by a difference in the outward semblance of keys apparently subjected to the same external influences. Look, for instance, at the respective keys of your wine-cellar and your coal-cellar. What a bright, rollicking, jovial look the first wears—polished without effeminacy, forcible yet insinuating—evidently habituated to your butler’s cordial grasp, and tenderly demonstrative of friction in his pocket. There is, indeed, a witching hour (about the fifth or sixth bottle, it is said), when that key assumes the figure of a miniature thyrus—the very wards seem to drip with “blushful Hippocrene”—ivy-leaves seem to wreath its stalk, and the handle curls round the fervent fingers with the cool tender freshness of vine-

tendrils. In these subterranean regions "the atom darkness in its slow turmoil" perhaps disposes the senses to such hallucinations; but, strange to say, no similar transfiguration attends the coal-cellar key. Visit that quiet retreat at what hour you will, no mysterious gnome peers at you from its cavernous depth—no swart cyclop "turns on" his one eye in your face with the obtrusive radiance of a policeman's lantern. A harmless, unnecessary cat, perhaps, pervades the gloomy precincts, but she is but a cat; Walpurgis' night itself could not invest her with solemnity, and the key remains a key to the end of the chapter. A hang-dog-looking, melancholy key it is—rusty, unamiable, antipathetic. How unlike "his wholesome brother" of the wine-cellar, though exercising his functions in such close proximity!

Observe, too, the engaging exterior of the area-gate key! Exposed to all the vicissitudes of weather, subjected to the temporary command of every scullion, yet ever bright, brisk, alert, and shining; alive to the meanest exigencies of domestic organization; cheerfully responsive to the call of butcher, baker, milkman, and fishmonger; not superciliously deaf to the voice of the humbler rag-merchant or sonorous dustman. How singular is its apt appreciation of the majesty of Themis, in the person of a policeman! with what oily alacrity it turns in the impassive lock to give him ingress, or discreet exit from the social seclusion of your kitchen! Thence, rising with rubicund visage, he goes forth, like a giant (doubtless refreshed) on his sternly beneficent career. His march eastward is, in fact, a modest "triumph"—not as madly clamorous, perhaps, as that of Indian Bacchus, but partaking in some degree of the god's privileges and attributes. Whispered "Evoes" from every area attend his steps; *Pan* is not entirely excluded from the pageant; the rattle of knife and fork will be heard, and the tinkle of the area-gate (and other) keys, instead of the clash of noisy cymbals.

The domestic latch-key, in full use, at the height of the season, is reported to have a worn and dissipated look. Those who are acquainted with its uses and habits affirm that it is apt to get muzzy and confused about four o'clock in the morning—incapable of key-holes, and altogether effete and idiotic.

No doubt there is an appropriate horror in the aspect of a "skeleton" key; the name imports it—secret murder is in the very sound. It has the *hiss* of caution, and the true burglarious rattle in it; there must be an evil harmony and coincidence between its countenance and its name. It leads the thoughts to another and a worse key—

The key of Newgate! Can the uninitiated realize its awful appearance? Viewed from the *outside*, no doubt, its peculiarities are less impressive; but we can conceive an aspect whose steely glitter might have the effect of Medusa's head!

The key of Bedlam is reported to work backwards, like a witch's prayer. Some say that it is always held by the ward end, and unlocks with the handle.

The Lord Chamberlain's key has a moral influence superior to that of any key in the kingdom—not excepting the Lord Chancellor's. It has the faculty of discrimination; and with the facility of a magic wand it separates the sheep from the goats in the fashionable herd.

But it would demand a greater space than these pages can afford to discuss the various attributes and powers of what may be called public keys;—from the Foreign-Office despatch-box key, to the keys of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—which, we doubt not, are to be distinguished by a dignified reticence, and an alacrity in locking up. What we would especially recommend to general observation is, the generic tendency of *all* keys to spontaneous reproduction. This tendency is perhaps most remarkable in the *clavis domestica*, or key of private life, whose prolific qualities may be tested by a simple experiment. A very small bunch of them left in any confined space during a few months' absence on the part of their owner, will be found on his return to have colonized the whole drawer. In fact, single keys should never be left under these conditions for any time: they become family keys in no time. It is supposed that they sprout like asparagus in damp weather, or are produced like button-mushrooms in a hot-bed. It is a singular fact, that this reproductive faculty is to be found in no other metallic substance, however fashioned; locks never multiply of their own devices; you may leave any number of sovereigns or half-crowns together, yet never find an additional sixpence among them: sometimes quite the reverse.

The awkward consequences which may arise from this property of the key of domestic life may be easily imagined. You may come some day in a transport of anxious haste to the receptacle of your more important keys, to seek for (let us say) the key of the medicine-chest in some moment of an exquisitely emotional character—such as your infant's having gulped down its mother's thimble:—instead of the desired key, you find a mob of little nameless, objectless keys, staring you in the face, tripping up your fingers, and maddening you by their multiplicity and inane uniformity of aspect. Curiously enough, these “tadpole” keys, as they may be called, have at first no special physiognomy; it is only when launched into practical existence, and apportioned among the key-holes of real life, that they grow to be as distinct in appearance, and as diabolical in character, as their elders.

Such is the essential nature of these “shining mischiefs.” Tricky, deceitful, capricious—never to be trusted out of your sight, and full of irritating associations when in it; informed by some devilish intelligence that only leads them wrong, and provocative of evil impulses in others:—“with all the rash dexterity of wit” for purposes of annoyance, yet powerless to do even the small good for which they were intended.

If man is wise, he will banish them from his pocket; if woman knows her own interests, she will lock them up for ever. If, however, the possession of great riches absolutely necessitates the employment of keys, let their hapless owner keep them well in hand, and allow no key to get

the better of him ; let there be no " master key " in his establishment, if he value his peace of mind. If he must use them, let him do so, in moderation ; he will never want an occasion to abuse them. But the best thing that can happen to him, is to lose them. When that fortunate, and not improbable, circumstance occurs, let him not rush madly into the second column of *The Times* newspaper—let him not provoke fate by offering a reward for their restoration—but let him " call the watch together, and thank God he is rid of knaves."

In concluding this alight notice of the properties of an agent only too powerful in its influence on human affairs, we cannot avoid taking a side-glance at certain keys whose qualifications are universally alluded to, in polite conversation and refined literature, but which have never yet been collected, labelled, and catalogued, as they ought to be.

We are constantly hearing of " the key to So-and-so's extraordinary conduct," " the key to Miss Such-a-one's affections," " the key to a certain person's machinations," " the key of Lord Somebody's conscience," " the key to everybody's secret thoughts and private affairs." These things, no doubt, have a real existence ; we cannot do without them ; they are an important part of those rather threadbare " properties " which belong to the world's stage (as it is generally called), and " life's poor play." But, has anybody seen them ? They are probably knocking about in that esthetic " green-room " of commonplace to which we all know our way ; from whence we draw those slashing wooden swords and tin bucklers, that are so effective in all arguments ; those spangled coats and jerkins in which our poor thoughts occasionally strut so bravely ; those banners, with grand inscriptions, which look quite as well as opinions, at a little distance. There also may be found " all that useful lot " of hyperbolic essences,—

The entities of things that are not yet :
Subtlest, but surest beings !

such as the wedge whose thin end is always being introduced into our most venerable institutions ; the hinge on which momentous affairs habitually turn ; the hypothetical leg which nobody has got to stand on, in all arguments ; the other side to every question ; in short, all the *matériel* for sensible conversation. These things are in constant requisition and daily use ; but, like the mysteriously-circulating shoe in the game of " Hunt the Slipper," their existence is only made manifest to the senses by the sounding rap with which we shuffle them round in the polite intercourse of good society.

It would be a good deed to fix, substantiate, and classify these useful but volatile possessions, that they may be always at hand when wanted in public speech or private conversation ; more especially the mystic keys to which we have referred. What a handy bunch that would be !

The Fords of Jordan, 1859.

'Tis scarce a hundred steps and one
 Across this ridge of frost and fire,
 Before the Eastward view be won.
 Stray on, and dally with desire,
 Then lift eyes, and behold.
 Hewn out without hands, they rise ;
 All the crests of Abarim.
 Whence the Prophet look'd of old,
 Back—o'er misery manifold,
 Forward—o'er the Land unrolled
 Underneath his way-worn eyes.
 Quivering all in noontide blaze
 Abarim, long Abarim
 Glows, with very brightness dim.
 Even as when the Seer look'd back
 On the mazed grave-marked track ;
 Over Edom, furnace-red,
 O'er a generation dead,
 When he knew his march was stayed.
 Fiends and angels watched and waited
 As the undimmed eyes closed slowly,
 As the vast limbs withered wholly
 From their ancient strength unbated,
 As into the Vale of Shade,
 Seeing, not seen, he passed away ;
 And none knoweth to this day
 Where the awful corpse is laid.
 * * * * *
 The Dead Sea salt, in crystal hoar,
 Hangs on our hair like acrid rime ;
 And we are grey, like many more,
 With bitterness and not with time.
 Two hours of thirst, before we reach
 Yon jungle dense, and scanty sward ;
 For many a league the only breach
 Where Jordan's cliffs allow a ford.
 Lo, spurs of Sheffield, do our will,
 And, little Syrian barbs, be gay ;

All morn we spared you on the hill,
Now,—o'er the level waste—away,
With your light stag-like bound.
So cross the plain, nor slacken speed,
And brush through Sodom-bush and reed,
And tearing thorn, and tamarisk harsh,
Wild growth of desert and of marsh,
Cumbering the holy ground.
Reach Jordan's beetling bank, and mark
The winding trench deep-cloven and dark;
The narrow belt of living green;
The secret stream that writhes between;
Death's River—sudden, swift, unseen—
He is changed from his gay going;
Could we know the arrowy stream,
Once, whose tender talk in flowing
Cast us softly into dream?
Whirling now with fitful gleam
In his precipice's shade,
Like a half-drawn Persian blade,
Of black steel, darkly bright?
At his birth he went not so,
Swelling pure with Hermon's snow,
But joyous leapt in light.
Must he fare to the Sad Sea,
Through waste places, even as we?
Yet he makes a little mirth,
Racing downwards evermore;
And the green things of sweet Earth
Cling a little to his shore:
Even so it is: so let it be.
But strip, and try your might with him:
He is the type of that black wave,
Wherein the strong ones fail to swim;
The likeness of the Grave.
Also his waters wash us free
From salt scurf of the Bitter Sea.
Stem his dark flood with shortened breath,
And take the lesson as you may:
That the Baptismal stream of Death
Doth cleanse Earth's bitterness away.

R. St. J. T.

Greenwich Hospital.

DURING the last days of September there was carried into force, in the Naval Hospital at Greenwich, an Act of Parliament which has effected a revolution in that famous and interesting establishment. Some nine hundred of the old pensioners, whose figures were so familiar, alike to the banqueters on whitebait and champagne, and the humbler consumers of tea and shrimps, quitted its walls for ever. As might have been expected from the dissolution of a kind of nineteenth-century monastery, the sight was not without its points of picturesque interest. The walls of the noble palace were lined with the boxes and bedding of the departing seamen, who assembled in knots to wait their turn for being taken to the railway station, and who toddled out together to their favourite inns to wish each other a characteristic farewell. It was the break-up of a system founded by an English Queen, and approved and strengthened by several generations of statesmen. Henceforth the Hospital is to be a hospital only in the narrower sense, and under conditions stricter and more limited than those which applied to it in its historical character of an asylum. A change of the kind in a place which Englishmen looked on with such peculiar curiosity and regard, is not an affair of every day even in an age of change. It invites a retrospective glance at the career of the institution, and some explanation of the causes which have brought it about.

While essentially part and parcel of the Royal Navy, Greenwich Hospital also claims a royal pedigree. Its nucleus was an unfinished palace of Charles II., upon a spot which was long dear to the sovereigns of England. The anchorage near held a Danish fleet in the eleventh century. The manor was possessed for ages by the Abbots of Ghent, under a gift from Ethelreda, niece of Alfred, which the Normans did not disturb. In the fifteenth century, after the suppression of the alien priories, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, built a palace on the spot where the west wing of the Hospital now stands; and this was added to and improved by successive princes, who sought in the air from the hills and the river the change and repose which their successors now enjoy in the Highlands and the Isle of Wight. Edward IV. was often in his palace of Greenwich; Henry VIII. and Elizabeth were born there; and there the short-lived Edward VI. both began and ended his days. From 1641, when Charles I. saw it for the last time, till the Restoration, it fell into decay, and hence the resolution of Charles II. to raise a new and more magnificent edifice on the site. But this work was never completed, and an

unexpected destiny was in store for the portion of it which he left. On the 19th May, 1692, took place the memorable sea-fight, in which Russell, Shovel, and Rooke, with, as it happened, very little help from their Dutch allies, defeated De Tourville off La Hogue. The seamanship of our countrymen on this occasion was only equalled by their gallantry, and both by their success. Sixteen French vessels were taken, including a couple of first-rates, and one or two were burnt besides. But the victory filled London with wounded men: and the spectacle reminded people that such occasions called for something else besides beer-barrels and tar-barrels. British seamen had already shown—whether against the French, Dutch, or Spaniards—a courage and skill as great as have ever been displayed since. But the unscrupulousness with which they were seized when wanted, was only matched by the unscrupulousness with which they were abandoned when done with. Some kind natures were shocked by this; and it is to the credit of Queen Mary, the consort of William III., that hers was one of them. The inscription which runs round the Painted Hall at Greenwich attributes to Mary's "pietas" the design of a refuge for the benefit of seamen; and a passage in Boyer's *History* gives an account of her strongest motive in this matter, which at once illustrates the mode of thinking of our ancestors on such subjects, and explains the form which the new charity took. Her Majesty wished, Boyer says, "to put them" (the seamen) "*in a probable way of ending their days in the fear of God.*" That the honest fellows were not in the "way" of doing so as things had previously been was quietly assumed by the queen, we fear on quite sufficient grounds. An Elizabethan admiral, quoted once before in the *Cornhill Magazine*,* compared their licence on shore to that of "horses" and "birds;" and Mandeville turns their notorious improvidence and profligacy to good account in his famous argument that "private vices" are "public benefits," since what, said he, would become of our trade and navy if sailors lived decently, took care of their money, and were not obliged by speedy destitution to fling themselves into the nautical labour market? The idea of the Hospital was thus, like that of most of our old almshouses and refuges, essentially monastic. It was not to be a charity only, but a place of retreat, under moral and religious superintendence, from the temptations as well as from the fatigues of the world. Queen Mary little foresaw what the quiet fishing village would become a century or so after she had been laid in Henry the Seventh's * Chapel.

The Charter of Greenwich Hospital is dated 25th October, 1694, and grants for a site "eight acres two roods and thirty-two square perches of land," and "all that capital messuage lately built or in building, commonly called by the name of Our Palace at Greenwich." The objects of the foundation were five in-number, and were described as follows:—

* Sir William Monson. ("Social History of the Navy.")

"1st. The relief and support of seamen serving on board the ships or vessels belonging to the navy royal, of us, our heirs and successors, or employed in our or their service at sea, who, by reason of age, wounds, or other disabilities, shall be incapable of further service at sea, and be unable to maintain themselves.

"2nd. The sustentation of the widows of seamen happening to be slain or disabled in such sea-service.

"3rd. The maintenance and education of the children of seamen happening to be slain or disabled in such sea-service.

"4th. The further relief and encouragement of seamen.

"5th. The improvement of navigation."

The charter of 1692 was succeeded by two Acts of Parliament in the same reign, the Registered Seamen's Act of 1696, and another enforcing it in 1697. Both offer to seafaring men and their families certain advantages in connection with Greenwich Hospital, which was thus viewed as an institution calculated to attract men to the sea-service. These advantages were—that registered seamen disabled in the sea-service "should be admitted and placed in the Hospital, and should have provided and allowed them, during their lives, at the charges of the Hospital, and out of the revenues thereof, according to the rules, &c. for its government, lodging, meat, drink, clothing, and other necessaries and conveniences. That the wives of such registered and disabled seamen, and the widows of those slain, killed, or drowned in the king's sea-service, and not of ability to maintain or provide comfortably for themselves, should be received into the Hospital, and there be provided for. That the children of the persons so described should be also received into the Hospital, be there provided for, and be educated at the charges of the Hospital till they were fit to be put out, or of ability to maintain themselves." The next Act, in 1703, removed the necessity of the seaman's having been formally "registered" for the service of the crown; and Acts passed in 1711, 1721, and 1735, extended the advantages of the Hospital to any seamen "maimed or slain in fight against the king's enemies or against pirates." But there can be no doubt, as the Royal Commission of 1859 observed, that merchant-seamen were only admissible in that particular case; and also that officers above the rank of mate were not contemplated as proper objects of relief. There have, indeed, been some instances of officers being received simply as pensioners, and one of these gives such a curious glimpse of the life of the old service, that our readers will be glad to know the circumstances. In 1711, when there were four hundred inmates, under a governor, lieutenant-governor, one captain, and two lieutenants, a certain Captain Clarke applied and was received on the establishment, and drew his "tobacco-money" like any other broken-down old salt. He was allowed to eat at the officers' table, and five years afterwards, in 1716, there is the following "minute" about him:—"It was agreed that Captain Edmund Clarke be allowed five shillings a week, having been an old captain, but being so

infirm that he could not serve the last war, and thereby not entitled to receive half-pay, which is allowed by reason of his great poverty, to commence this month." A year afterwards, he applied for an increase, and his allowance was raised to fifty pounds a year, "in consideration of his very great age, and his long service in the navy, having been a captain many years." But next summer, we find the Board giving direction, "upon the petition of the widow Clarke, that the house may discharge the expense of a coffin and shroud for her husband, who died in the Hospital," and after that, the widow appears as receiving "two-and-sixpence per week out of the charity-box." What a tragedy lies in these little entries! Here was a man who had probably served with Benbow, who must have been in the Dutch wars of the Restoration, and who may have even fought as a youngster under Blake against the great Van Tromp himself, and we find him dying a pauper in the rank of captain. When so little provision was made for the old age of officers, we can easily fancy what the fate of common men was; and how necessary was the institution which alone saved Captain Clarke from dying in the streets. Thousands of seamen from that time forward owed to the Hospital shelter in life, care in sickness, and consolation in death; and this broad praise ought to be given all the more distinctly because we shall have to show the existence of grave abuses which tarnished its splendour, and helped to necessitate the revolution which has at length abolished its most characteristic features.

The principles and objects of Greenwich Hospital having been defined, as we have seen, by the charters and subsequent Acts of Parliament, Commissioners were appointed to carry them out, through the agency of a Board of Directors selected from their body—the discipline of the establishment being vested in a staff of civil and military officers, forming a council, one of whom was appointed, from time to time, a governor by the Admiralty. Such was the first constitution of the Hospital. The first endowment, after the royal grant of the site and the unfinished palace of Charles, was from the "naval sixpences"—a contribution of sixpence a month from the pay of seamen of the navy. In 1705, the effects of "Kidd the pirate" were given to the Hospital by Queen Anne; and it says much for that gentleman's untiring industry that they amounted to the respectable sum of 6,472*l*. In 1707 the forfeited and unclaimed shares of prize and bounty money were assigned to it. In 1712 *all* seamen's sixpences were made liable,—which, considering that the navy has always protected merchant ships in time of war, was not unreasonable. But the most splendid donation ever made to Greenwich Hospital at one time was that of the Derwentwater estates—*forfeited* by the attainder of the Jacobite James Radclyffe, third Earl of Derwentwater, in 1716. This grant was made in 1735, at which time the lands brought in 6,000*l*. a year. The Hospital paid off the encumbrances; gave a marriage portion to the attainted earl's daughter; and made other payments to the family. As years rolled by, and minerals were discovered on the property, its

rental rose to the net sum of 40,204*l.* 15*s.*, at which it stood in 1859. The chief sources of the revenue of the Hospital, not already enumerated, were the prize-money of deserters granted in 1747; a payment of 1*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.* per cent. on the proceeds of prizes, droits of Admiralty, and bounty-money, increased to five per cent. by the incorporation of the Chatham chest in 1814; and a fourth of the freight of all treasure carried by ships of the royal navy, bestowed in 1819. The total net income of the Hospital in the year 1859 was 148,198*l.* 9*s.* 2*d.*; an income worthy of the magnificent building for the sake of which, and of its pious and generous objects, it was created.

That building, the high domes and long stately colonnades of which are so familiar to all who love to see London from the noblest avenue leading to her—the river—was completed between 1694 and 1758. Sir Christopher Wren gratuitously furnished a plan. The palace of Charles was taken as the north-west wing and modified to suit the design; and that quarter of the pile still bears his name, as the corresponding one on the east does that of Queen Anne, and the two behind, those of Queen Mary and King William. The Painted Hall was roofed in in 1703, and was at first used as a public refectory, of which the upper part, decorated by Thornhill, held the table of the officers. Pensioners were received as early as 1705, before which year 50,000*l.* had been spent on the building; and at first they only mustered one hundred strong. By 1708, there were 350 in the house, the income being 12,000*l.*, of which half was devoted to the works in progress. Thirty years afterwards, the number received had reached 1,000, and from that time it steadily increased till the complement attained, in 1814, its *maximum* of 2,710. After that time, there was a progressive decrease. In 1848, the number of vacancies reported by the governor to the Admiralty was 11; in 1852, it had reached 180; in 1856, 720; till at the date of the Royal Commission in 1859, there were less than 1,600 residents to avail themselves of accommodation calculated for 2,642. Seven wards were entirely closed for want of occupants.

Such a state of things demanded an official inquiry, and a Royal Commission was appointed accordingly, the report of which, with the evidence, is the best book in the literature of the subject. The first thing that strikes a reader of it is the enormous expense of the machinery by which in our time some 1,600 old seamen have been maintained. We have already shown that the income of Greenwich Hospital for 1859 was 148,198*l.* 9*s.* 2*d.* Now during that year, 48,667*l.* 7*s.* 10*d.* was expended on the establishment, and 50,910*l.* 1*s.* 0½*d.* on the pensioners. That is to say, it cost nearly as much to administer the institution as to support the men for whom the institution was designed. One would almost think that the pensioners existed for the sake of being governed, and that to feed, and clothe, and nurse *them*, was a subordinate part of the original design. This result becomes particularly curious when viewed from two different points of comparison. In the first place, on comparing the

expenses of a Greenwich pensioner with those of an invalide of the *Hôtel des Invalides*, we find that the pensioner costs 30*l.* odd per annum for nourishment, and 28*l.* odd for administration, while the invalide costs 26*l.* odd for nourishment, and only 5*l.* for administration. In the second place, on comparing the pensioner of 1859 with the pensioner of 1805, we find that he cost 30*l.* and 28*l.* odd in the later as against 28*l.* and 9*l.* odd in the earlier year. And yet this monstrous growth of disproportion took place during a period in which the civil department of the Hospital was greatly simplified. Between the years 1805 and 1859 the expense of the pensioner did not increase, and their numbers diminished, but the cost of the establishment nearly doubled itself; although in the interval there occurred a considerable diminution of business from the ceasing of the merchant-seamen's sixpences, of prize money, and of lighthouse dues, and from other details.

In order to make this extravagance more intelligible, it will be as well to take a look at some of the items of the cost of the place. We have seen already, that the discipline of the Hospital was conducted from the beginning by certain officers appointed for the purpose. This staff was raised in modern times to the number of twenty officers—eleven of whom were more than seventy, and eight of them more than sixty years of age. These gentlemen received 8,700*l.* a year in salaries alone, besides house accommodation, and 47,498*l.* 12*s.* 1*d.* was spent on their apartments during the twenty years ending in 1859. The civil officers, again, were far too numerous; many of their duties were performed by deputy; the mode of keeping accounts was old-fashioned and clumsy; and there was a needlessly large batch of clerks. Everything about the Hospital was conducted with a dignified indifference to expense. For example, the house brewed its own beer, and 15,240*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.* was spent in the course of twenty years upon building and repairing the brewery. The bakery cost, in the same time, 1,459*l.* 6*s.* 11*d.* The washing of the pensioners' linen, in the year 1859, came to 3,181*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.*, though it used to be returned from the laundry in such a state that it was a matter of favour to "pensioners of good character" to be allowed to wash their linen at their own expense.

This exorbitant scale of outlay would have been more pardonable if the result of it had been to make the pensioners thoroughly happy. But it is impossible to look into the history of Greenwich Hospital without seeing that it has never done for its inmates what they had a right to expect from its magnificent resources. No doubt it has saved whole generations of seamen from the workhouse,* and has given comparative comfort to the old age of thousands whose old age must, but for it, have languished in dismal and solitary penury. But we have a right to measure the usefulness of every institution by its means, and we say that

* We observe, from a Parliamentary return, that there are at least a thousand man-of-war's men in the workhouses of England and Wales, among whom several are known to have been Trafalgar men.

much as Greenwich Hospital has done, it might have done a great deal more. The grossest defect, perhaps, has been its failure to give adequate assistance to pensioners' wives. That the benefit of the wives was contemplated by the founders, is clear from the early Acts to which we have already referred. But the Hospital has steadily ignored them, and has prohibited marriage into the bargain. They have received nothing from it except broken victuals, or "offal." They have not even been allowed what they have saved the Hospital by washing their husbands' linen. Where the husband has been allowed to go on the "money list," and receive his rations in cash, they have been calculated at "contract price," at an average of less than tenpence a day. As the tobacco, or pocket-money of pensioners remained at the original rate of one shilling a week till some five years ago, the whole amount within reach of a married man has been deplorably insufficient. Accordingly the circumstances of married pensioners have always been wretched, and the fate of their children too often in the last degree calamitous and degraded. When the pensioner went into the infirmary, too, he lost the privilege of the "money list," and he has been known to stay out till he was at the verge of death rather than expose his wife to the inevitable destitution which must ensue from his seeking medical help.

Sternier battles than the Nile or Copenhagen have been fought by British seamen, in the very place of retreat where we have been in the habit of thinking that their toils and dangers were over for ever. But to these tragic abuses must be added abuses of a vulgarer though scarcely less cruel kind. At various periods in the history of the Hospital, the food of the pensioners has been bad, and their accommodation insufficient. "Bull beef" and "sour beer" were complained of in the celebrated agitation of 1778-9,* when Lord Sandwich was at the Admiralty, and when the publication of a "case" about the grievances of the pensioners by the lieutenant-governor, Captain Baillie, led to the trial in the Queen's Bench, which gave rise to the famous maiden speech of Erskine. Such shameful causes of discontent existed down to our own time. There is abundant official evidence that the meat has been inferior and too tough; that the milk has been indifferent; the shoes of the men hard and uncomfortable, and so forth. Anybody who is curious about such details may be referred to the Report of the Royal Commission. There are two letters there, written in 1846 and 1848 (Appendix 216 *seq.*) by Sir John Liddell, Director-General of the Medical Department of the Navy, abounding in statements which an Englishman caring for the navy cannot read without a sense of humiliation. And it has sometimes happened that improvements in such points have been prevented by a want of sympathy between the governor and the commissioners of the Hospital.

* There was a great fire in Greenwich Hospital that year; a fire of so suspicious a character that a strict inquiry was made as to whether it was caused by accident or design. But "nothing came out that could lead to a discovery."—*History of Greenwich Hospital*, 1789.

We have already described the first constitution of the Hospital. In 1775 the commissioners and governors were incorporated. But a grave deficit having been discovered in the accounts of the treasurer (by the misconduct of whose deputy it had been caused) in 1828, the corporation was dissolved. Under the new constitution, the discipline was separated from the administration,—the first being left to the governor, the second to a Board of Commissioners. Of course, some of the commissioners were soon appointed for political reasons; and when this began to be felt as an evil, the remedy hit on proved worse than the disease. Commissionerships were given to naval officers less distinguished than—and junior to—the governors on whom they were to act as a check, and an inharmonious double government was the result. Thus, no modern governor did more for the condition of the pensioners than Sir Charles Adam, and he lived in a perpetual conflict with the commissioners.

In short, so many unsatisfactory circumstances with regard to the condition of the Hospital generally were brought to light by the official inquiry of 1859, that we cannot wonder at the result which has followed. The Royal Commission's Report shows that that body felt a revolution in the whole scheme to be unavoidable; and it has come about, accordingly, within a few years. Under the Greenwich Hospital Act of last session, which came into force at the close of September, the Admiralty announced that the Hospital would in future *be open to receive within its walls only infirm and helpless seamen*. And it offered to all pensioners who chose to leave the building, the following conditions, which we give in the language of the authorities proposing them:—

1. Any in-pensioner on his discharge from the Hospital will receive the same amount of out-pension as that which he gave up when he came into the Hospital, which pension will in future be called his "naval pension."

2. In addition to his "naval pension" he will be paid a "Greenwich Hospital pension," provided he comes within the following rules, viz. :—If he is fifty-five years of age, and has been a pensioner (whether in the Hospital or out) for a period of five years, he will be paid 5*d.* a day, that is 7*l.* 12*s.* a year; or if he is seventy years of age, and has been a pensioner (whether in the Hospital or out) for a period of ten years, he will be paid 9*d.* a day, that is 18*l.* 12*s.* a year.

3. In further addition to his pension he will be paid one-half the money allowance he was receiving from the Hospital on the 6th April last, whether it be the weekly money paid to him of either three, four, or five shillings, according to his classification, or the two shillings' allowance to married men, or his weekly wages for acting in any capacity which is paid out of the Hospital funds. But no other payments whatever, whether "provision money," "gratuities," &c., will be allowed to count for this allowance.

4. In making the foregoing offer to in-pensioners of Greenwich, the Lords of the Admiralty desire, so far as their powers enable them, to make up an allowance of 36*l.* 10*s.* a year, which is equal to 1*s.* a week, or 2*s.* a day; but the foregoing pensions and money allowance will not in the case of every pensioner make up that sum. In such case the Lords of the Admiralty will allow the deficient amount to be made up if possible out of the other half of the money allowance.

5. In the cases, however, of those pensioners whose "naval pension," "Greenwich Hospital pension," and full amount of money allowance combined, will not amount to 36*l.* 10*s.* per annum, the Lords of the Admiralty are not empowered by law to offer more.

We believe that nine hundred of the pensioners have accepted these conditions, and have dispersed themselves over the country to live on their various rates of allowance. What the average pension granted may be, we have no means of knowing, but if some of the men have a larger sum than 36*l.* 10*s.*, so also many of them will have much less, and will be unable to command in their homes the standard of living with which the Hospital supplied them. They elect to go, we take it, partly because they know that the government of the place is to be changed, that it is to become a Hospital in the narrower sense of the word, and that there will be less freedom of ingress and egress for them henceforth; but this is only part of a more general feeling in favour of liberty among them, at which nobody who has inquired into their condition can wonder. The authorities at Greenwich Hospital have contrived to make a palace as dull as a prison. The men have had no amusements but a library inconveniently furnished. They have not been allowed to play cards, nor to have flower-pots in their windows, nor to receive friends and visitors in private; and it is not many years ago since they were forbidden to walk on the terraces. Some of the punishments, too, such as being compelled to wear a yellow collar, and do scavenger's work, have been harsh and injudicious. All these things have combined with the monastic character of the place to give a character of *ennui* and listlessness to the Greenwich pensioner's life which must have struck every observing visitor. Dulness within the walls has been relieved chiefly by temptation without. Since the age when Queen Mary pictured to herself Greenwich as a place of pious repose where the sailor might end his days "in the fear of God," it has become the favourite haunt of the pleasure-loving Cockney—an emporium of shrimps, a reservoir of beer. Those quaint figures—the "geese" and "blue-bottles"* of local slang—lounging about under the trees of the park, and loitering through the streets in the dress of another age, have been regarded by the holiday-maker from the metropolis as parts of the amusement of the place. They have been paid for yarns in liquor and stray shillings, and have found the doctrine that sailors lived only for grog and girls accepted by their admirers as one of the many glories of the British navy. It has been well remarked that, on the whole, the old fellows have been more decent in their lives than we had a right to expect under the peculiar circumstances. But a chapter might be written on Greenwich morality and its effects on the parish rates, which nobody would care to bind up with the naval histories of Brenton or James, but which would help to reconcile

* *Greenwich Hospital: A Series of Naval Sketches. By an Old Sailor. 1836.*

the reader to the break-up of an institution that has had much in it to kindle the imagination and justify the pride of our countrymen. The break-up is, after all, one in which people will acquiesce rather than one at which they will rejoice. It was a noble as well as a pious idea to gather under the roofs of a grand edifice—at once a dwelling-place and a naval monument, and placed on the shores of a river, itself one of the chief sources of our maritime strength—the survivors of each generation of warriors against the enemy or the storm. Here the traditions of one age blended gradually with the experience of the next; stories of Shovel were passed on to those who fought under Hawke; the conqueror with Rodney lived to welcome the heroes of Trafalgar—not as bedridden or imbecile men, though it might be somewhat shattered—but while still able to enjoy life, and to give the vividness of reality to the narratives of the past. All phases of naval service were represented. One of the "saucy Arethusas" smoked his pipe with an old "Agamemnon," and men who had first smelt powder on the Canadian Lakes listened reverently to the recollections of those who had seen *L'Orient* explode in thunder at the Nile. Greenwich Hospital will always be a great and useful institution—a mighty boon, whether to the sick nursed within, or to the poor pensioned without its walls. But not the less is there something disappointing in its recent transformation, even to those who admit its necessity, and all the more so when we remember how judiciously the splendid foundation has been administered.



CYTHIA'S LAST LOVER.

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER, 1865.

Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER LV.

AN ABSENT LOVER RETURNS.



ND now it was late June ; and to Molly's and her father's extreme urgency in pushing, and Mr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick's affectionate persistency in pulling, Cynthia had yielded, and had gone back to finish her interrupted visit in London, but not before the bruit of her previous sudden return to nurse Molly had told strongly in her favour in the fluctuating opinion of the little town. Her affair with Mr. Preston was thrust into the shade ; while every one was speaking of her worthiness. Under the gleam of Molly's victory everything assumed a rosy hue, as indeed became the custom when actual roses were fairly in bloom.

One morning Mrs. Gibson brought Molly a great basket of flowers, that had been sent from the Hall. Molly still breakfasted in bed, but had just come down, and was now well enough to arrange them on the dressing-room, and as she did so with cheerful alacrity, she made some comments on each.

"Ah! these white pinks! They were Mrs. Hamley's favourite flower; and so like her! This little bit of sweetbriar, it quite scents the room. It has pricked my fingers, but never mind. Oh, mamma, look at this rose! I forget its name, but it is very rare, and grows up in the sheltered corner of the wall, near the mulberry-tree. Roger bought the tree for his mother with his own money when he was quite a boy; he showed it me, and made me notice it."

"I daresay it was Roger who got it now. You heard papa say he had seen him yesterday."

"No! Roger! Roger come home!" said Molly, turning first red, then very white.

"Yes. Oh, I remember you had gone to bed before papa came in, and he was called off early to tiresome Mrs. Beale. Yes, Roger turned up at the Hall the day before yesterday."

But Molly leaned back against her chair, too faint to do more at these flowers for some time. She had been startled by the suddenness of the news. "Roger come home!"

It happened that Mr. Gibson was unusually busy on this particular day, and he did not return until late in the afternoon. But Molly kept her place in the drawing-room all the time, not even going to take her customary siesta, so anxious was she to hear everything about Roger's return, which as yet appeared to her almost incredible. But it was quite natural in reality; the long monotony of her illness had made her lose all count of time. When Roger left England, his idea was to coast round Africa on the eastern side until he reached the Cape; and thence to make what further journey or voyage might seem to him best in pursuit of his scientific objects. To Cape Town all his letters had been addressed of late; and there, two months before, he had received the intelligence of Osborne's death, as well as Cynthia's hasty letter of relinquishment. He did not consider that he was doing wrong in returning to England immediately, and reporting himself to the gentlemen who had sent him out, with a full explanation of the circumstances relating to Osborne's private marriage and sudden death. He offered, and they accepted his offer, to go out again for any time that they might think equivalent to the five months he was yet engaged to them for. They were most of them gentlemen of property, and saw the full importance of procuring the marriage of an eldest son, and installing his child as the natural heir to the descended estate. This much information, but in a most confidential form, Mr. Gibson gave to Molly, in a way far exceeding her expectations. She sat on her sofa, looking very pretty with her cheeks now and then flushed with nervousness in her eyes.

"Well!" said she when her manner stopped speaking.

"Well! what?" asked he, playfully.

"Oh! why, such a number of things. I've been waiting all day to ask you all about everything. How is he looking?"

"If a young man of twenty-four ever does take so getting thin, I

should say that he was taller. "As it is, I suppose it is only that he looks broader, stronger—more muscular."

"Oh! is he changed?" asked Molly, a little disturbed by this account.

"No, not changed; and yet not the same. He is as brown as a berry for one thing; caught a little of the negro tinge, and a beard as fine and sweeping as my bay-mare's tail."

"A beard! But go on, papa. Does he talk as he used to do? I should know his voice amongst ten thousand."

"I did not catch any Hottentot twang, if that's what you mean. Nor did he say, 'Cæsar and Pompey berry much alike, 'specially Pompey,' which is the only specimen of negro language I can remember just at this moment."

"And which I never could see the wit of," said Mrs. Gibson, who had come into the room after the conversation had begun; and did not understand what it was aiming at. Molly fidgeted; she wanted to go on with her questions and keep her father to definite and matter-of-fact answers, and she knew that when his wife chimed into a conversation, Mr. Gibson was very apt to find out that he must go about some necessary piece of business.

"Tell me, how are they all getting on together?" It was an inquiry which she did not make in general before Mrs. Gibson, for Molly and her father had tacitly agreed to keep silence on what they knew or had observed, respecting the three who formed the present family at the Hall.

"Oh!" said Mr. Gibson, "Roger is evidently putting everything to rights in his firm, quiet way."

"Things to rights. Why, what's wrong?" asked Mrs. Gibson quickly. "The squire and the French daughter-in-law don't get on well together, I suppose? I am always so glad Cynthia acted with the promptitude she did; it would have been very awkward for her to have been mixed up with all these complications. Poor Roger! to find himself supplanted by a child when he comes home!"

"You were not in the room, my dear, when I was telling Molly of the reasons for Roger's return; it was to put his brother's child at once into his rightful and legal place. So now, when he finds the work partly done to his hands, he is happy and gratified in proportion."

"Then he is not much affected by Cynthia's breaking off her engagements?" (Mrs. Gibson could afford to call it an "engagement" now,) "I never did give him credit for very deep feelings."

"On the contrary, he feels it very acutely. He and I had a long talk about it, yesterday."

Both Molly and Mrs. Gibson would have liked to have heard something more about this conversation; but Mr. Gibson did not choose to go on with the subject. The only point which he disclosed, was that Roger had insisted on his right to have a personal interview with Cynthia; and,

on hearing that she was in London at present, had deferred any further explanation or expostulation by letter, preferring to await her return.

Molly went on with her questions on other subjects. "And Mrs. Osborne Hamley? How is she?"

"Wonderfully brightened up by Roger's presence. I don't think I have ever seen her smile before; but she gives him the sweetest smiles from time to time. They are evidently good friends; and she loses her strange startled look when she speaks to him. I suspect she has been quite aware of the squire's wish that she should return to France; and has been hard put to it to decide whether to leave her child or not. The idea that she would have to make some such decision came upon her when she was completely shattered by grief and illness, and she has not had any one to consult as to her duty until Roger came, upon whom she has evidently firm reliance. He told me something of this himself."

"You seem to have had quite a long conversation with him, papa!"

"Yes. I was going to see old Abraham, when the squire called to me over the hedge, as I was jogging along. He told me the news; and there was no resisting his invitation to come back and lunch with them. Besides, one gets a great deal of meaning out of Roger's words; it did not take so very long a time to hear this much."

"I should think he would come and call upon us soon," said Mrs. Gibson to Molly; "and then we shall see how much we can manage to hear."

"Do you think he will, papa?" said Molly, more doubtfully. She remembered the last time he was in that very room, and the hopes with which he left it; and she fancied that she could see traces of this thought in her father's countenance at his wife's speech.

"I cannot tell, my dear. Until he is quite convinced of Cynthia's intentions, it cannot be very pleasant for him to come on mere visits of ceremony to the house in which he has known her; but he is one who will always do what he thinks right, whether pleasant or not."

Mrs. Gibson could hardly wait till her husband had finished his sentence before she testified against a part of it.

"Convinced of Cynthia's intentions! I should think she had made them pretty clear! What more does the man want?"

"He is not as yet convinced that the letter was not written in a fit of temporary feeling. I have told him that this was true; although I did not feel it my place to explain to him the causes of that feeling. He believes that he can induce her to resume the former footing. I do not; and I have told him so; but of course he needs the full conviction that she alone can give him."

"Poor Cynthia! My poor child!" said Mrs. Gibson, plaintively. "What she has exposed herself to by letting herself be over-persuaded by that man!"

Mr. Gibson's eyes flashed fire. But he kept his lips tight closed; and only said, "That man, indeed!" quite below his breath.

Molly, too, had been damped by an expression or two in her father's speech. "Mere visits of ceremony!" Was it so, indeed? A "mere visit of ceremony!" Whatever it was, the call was paid before many days were over. That he felt all the awkwardness of his position towards Mrs. Gibson—that he was in reality suffering pain all the time—was but too evident to Molly; but of course Mrs. Gibson saw nothing of this in her gratification at the proper respect paid to her by one whose name was already in the newspapers that chronicled his return, and about whom already Lord Cumnor and the Towers family had been making inquiry.

Molly was sitting in her pretty white invalid's dress, half reading, half dreaming, for the June air was so clear and ambient, the garden so full of bloom, the trees so full of leaf, that reading by the open window was only a pretence at such a time; besides which Mrs. Gibson continually interrupted her with remarks about the pattern of her worsted-work. It was after lunch—orthodox calling time, when Maria ushered in Mr. Roger Hamley. Molly started up; and then stood shyly and quietly in her place while a bronzed, bearded, grave man came into the room, in whom she at first had to seek for the merry boyish face she knew by heart only two years ago. But months in the climates in which Roger had been travelling age as much as years in more temperate districts. And constant thought and anxiety while in daily peril of life deepen the lines of character upon a face. Moreover, the circumstances that had of late affected him personally were not of a nature to make him either buoyant or cheerful. But his voice was the same; that was the first point of the old friend Molly caught, when he addressed her in a tone far softer than he used in speaking conventional politenesses to her stepmother.

"I was so sorry to hear how ill you had been! You are looking but delicate!" letting his eyes rest upon her face with affectionate examination. Molly felt herself colour all over with the consciousness of his regard. To do something to put an end to it, she looked up, and showed him her beautiful soft grey eyes, which he never remembered to have noticed before. She smiled at him as she blushed still deeper, and said,—

"Oh! I am quite strong now to what I was. It would be a shame to be ill when everything is in its full summer beauty."

"I have heard how deeply we—I am indebted to you—my father can hardly praise you——"

"Please don't," said Molly, the tears coming into her eyes in spite of herself. He seemed to understand her at once; he went on as if speaking to Mrs. Gibson: "Indeed my little sister-in-law is never weary of talking about Monsieur le Docteur, as she calls your husband!"

"I have not had the pleasure of making Mrs. Osborne Hamley's acquaintance yet," said Mrs. Gibson, suddenly aware of a duty which might have been expected from her, "and I must beg you to apologise to her for my remissness. But Molly has been such a care and anxiety to me—"

for, you know, I look upon her quite as my own child—that I really have not gone anywhere, excepting to the Towers perhaps I should say, which is just like another home to me. And then I understood that Mrs. Osborne Hamley was thinking of returning to France before long? Still it was very remiss.”

The little trap thus set for news of what might be going on in the Hamley family was quite successful. Roger answered her thus:—

“I am sure Mrs. Osborne Hamley will be very glad to see any friends of the family, as soon as she is a little stronger. I hope she will not go back to France at all. She is an orphan, and I trust we shall induce her to remain with my father. But at present nothing is arranged.” Then, as if glad to have got over his “visit of ceremony,” he got up and took leave. When he was at the door he looked back, having, as he thought, a word more to say; but he quite forgot what it was, for he surprised Molly’s intent gaze, and sudden confusion at discovery, and went away as soon as he could.

“Poor Osborne was right!” said he. “She has grown into delicate fragrant beauty just as he said she would; or is it the character which has formed her face? Now the next time I enter these doors it will be to learn my fate!”

Mr. Gibson had told his wife of Roger’s desire to have a personal interview with Cynthia, rather with a view to her repeating what he said to her daughter. He did not see any exact necessity for this, it is true; but he thought that it might be advisable that she should know all the truth in which she was concerned, and he told his wife this. But she took the affair into her own management, and, although she apparently agreed with Mr. Gibson, she never named the affair to Cynthia; all that she said to her was—

“Your old admirer, Roger Hamley, has come home in a great hurry in consequence of poor dear Osborne’s unexpected decease. He must have been rather surprised to find the widow and her little boy established at the Hall. He came to call here the other day, and made himself really rather agreeable, although his manners are not improved by the society he has kept on his travels. Still I prophesy he will be considered as a fashionable ‘lion,’ and perhaps the very unaccountable which jars against my sense of refinement, may even become admired in a scientific traveller, who has been into more desert places, and eaten more extraordinary food, than any other Englishman of the day. I suppose he has given up all chance of inheriting the estate, for I hear he talks of returning to Africa, and becoming a regular wanderer. Your name was not mentioned, but I believe he inquired about you from Mr. Gibson.”

“There!” said she to herself, as she folded up and directed this letter; “that can’t disturb her, or make her uncomfortable. And it’s all the truth too, or very near it. Of course he’ll want to see her when she comes back; but by that time I do hope Mr. Henderson will have pronounced again, and that that affair will be all settled.”

But Cynthia returned to Hollingsford one Tuesday morning, and in answer to her mother's anxious inquiries on the subject, would only say that Mr. Henderson had not offered again. Why should he? She had refused him once, and he did not know the reason of her refusal, at least one of the reasons. She did not know if she should have taken him if there had been no such person as Roger Hamley in the world. No! Uncle and Aunt Kirkpatrick had never heard anything about Roger's offer,—nor had her cousins. She had always declared her wish to keep it a secret, and she had not mentioned it to any one, whatever other people might have done." Underneath this light and careless vein there were other feelings; but Mrs. Gibson was not one to probe beneath the surface. She had set her heart on Mr. Henderson's marrying Cynthia very early in their acquaintance: and to know, firstly, that the same wish had entered into his head, and that Roger's attachment to Cynthia, with its consequences, had been the obstacle; and secondly, that Cynthia herself with all the opportunities of propinquity that she had lately had, had failed to provoke a repetition of the offer,—it was, as Mrs. Gibson said, "enough to provoke a saint." All the rest of the day she alluded to Cynthia as a disappointing and ungrateful daughter; Molly could not make out why, and resented it for Cynthia, until the latter said, bitterly, "Never mind, Molly. Mamma is only vexed because Mr.—because I have not come back an engaged young lady."

"Yes; and I am sure you might have done,—there's the ingratitude! I am not so unjust as to want you to do what you can't do!" said Mrs. Gibson, querulously.

"But where's the ingratitude, mamma? I am very much tired, and perhaps that makes me stupid; but I cannot see the ingratitude." Cynthia spoke very wearily, leaning her head back on the sofa-cushions, as if she did not much care to have an answer.

"Why, don't you see we are doing all we can for you; dressing you well, and sending you to London; and when you might relieve us of the expense of all this, you don't."

"No! Cynthia, I will speak," said Molly, all crimson with indignation, and pushing away Cynthia's restraining hand. "I am sure papa does not feel, and does not mind, any expense he incurs about his daughters. And I know quite well that he does not wish us to marry, unless——" She faltered and stopped.

"Unless what?" said Mrs. Gibson, half-mocking.

"Unless we love some one very dearly indeed," said Molly, in a low, firm tone.

"Well, after this tirade—really rather indelicate, I must say—I have done. I will neither help nor hinder any love-affairs of you two young ladies. In my days we were glad of the advice of our elders." And she left the room to put into fulfilment an idea which had just struck her: to write a confidential letter to Mrs. Kirkpatrick, giving her "her

version of Cynthia's "unfortunate entanglement" and "delicate sense of honour," and hints of her entire indifference to all the masculine portion of the world, Mr. Henderson being dexterously excluded from the category.

"Oh, dear!" said Molly, throwing herself back in a chair, with a sigh of relief, as Mrs. Gibson left the room; "how cross I do get since I have been ill. But I could not bear her to speak as if papa grudged you anything."

"I am sure he does not, Molly. You need not defend him on my account. But I am sorry mamma still looks upon me as "an encumbrance," as the advertisements in *The Times* always call us unfortunate children. But I have been an encumbrance to her all my life. I am getting very much into despair about everything, Molly. I shall try my luck in Russia. I have heard of a situation as English governess at Moscow, in a family owning whole provinces of land, and serfs by the hundred. I put off writing my letter till I came home; I shall be as much out of the way there as if I was married. Oh, dear! travelling all night is not good for the spirits. How is Mr. Preston?"

"Oh, he has taken Cumnor Grange, three miles away, and he never comes in to the Hollingsford tea-parties now. I saw him once in the street, but it's a question which of us tried the hardest to get out of the other's way."

"You've not said anything about Roger, yet."

"No; I did not know if you would care to hear. He is very much older-looking; quite a strong grown-up man. And papa says he is much graver. Ask me any questions, if you want to know, but I have only seen him once."

"I was in hopes he would have left the neighbourhood by this time. Mamma said he was going to travel again."

"I can't tell," said Molly. "I suppose you know," she continued, but hesitating a little before she spoke, "that he wishes to see you."

"No! I never heard. I wish he would have been satisfied with my letter. It was as decided as I could make it. If I say I won't see him, I wonder if his will or mine will be the strongest?"

"His," said Molly. "But you must see him; you owe it to him. He will never be satisfied without it."

"Suppose he talks me round into resuming the engagement? I should only break it off again."

"Surely you can't be 'talked round' if your mind is made up. But perhaps it is not really, Cynthia?" asked she, with a little wistful anxiety betraying itself in her face.

"It is quite made up. I am going to teach little Russian girls; and am never going to marry nobody."

"You are not serious, Cynthia. And yet it is a very serious thing."

But Cynthia went into one of her wild moods, and no more reason or sensible meaning was to be got out of her at the time.

CHAPTER LVI.

"OFF WITH THE OLD LOVE, AND ON WITH THE NEW."

THE next morning saw Mrs. Gibson in a much more contented frame of mind. She had written and posted her letter, and the next thing was to keep Cynthia in what she called a reasonable state, or, in other words, to try and cajole her into docility. But it was so much labour lost. Cynthia had already received a letter from Mr. Henderson before she came down to breakfast,—a declaration of love, a proposal of marriage as clear as words could make it; together with an intimation that, unable to wait for the slow delays of the post, he was going to follow her down to Hollingford, and would arrive at the same time that she had done herself on the previous day. Cynthia said nothing about this letter to any one. She came late into the breakfast-room, after Mr. and Mrs. Gibson had finished the actual business of the meal; but her unpunctuality was quite accounted for by the fact that she had been travelling all the night before. Molly was not as yet strong enough to get up so early. Cynthia hardly spoke, and did not touch her food. Mr. Gibson went about his daily business, and Cynthia and her mother were left alone.

"My dear," said Mrs. Gibson, "you are not eating your breakfast as you should do. I am afraid our meals seem very plain and homely to you after those in Hyde Park Street?"

"No," said Cynthia; "I am not hungry, that's all."

"If we were as rich as your uncle, I should feel it to be both a duty and a pleasure to keep an elegant table; but limited means are a sad clog to one's wishes. I don't suppose that, work as he will, Mr. Gibson can earn more than he does at present; while the capabilities of the law are boundless. Lord Chancellor! Titles as well as fortune!"

Cynthia was almost too much absorbed in her own reflections to reply, but she did say,—

"Hundreds of briefless barristers. Take the other side, mamma."

"Well; but I have noticed that many of these have private fortunes."

"Perhaps. Mamma, I expect Mr. Henderson will come and call this morning."

"Oh, my precious child! But how do you know? My darling Cynthia, am I to congratulate you?"

"No! I suppose I must tell you. I have had a letter this morning from him, and he is coming down by the Umpire to-day."

"But he has offered? He surely must mean to offer, at any rate?"

Cynthia played with her teaspoon before she replied; then she looked up, like one startled from a dream, and caught the echo of her mother's question.

"Offered! yes, I suppose he has."

"And you accept him? Say yes, Cynthia, and make me happy!"

"I shan't say yes to make any one happy except myself, and the

Russian scheme has great charms for me." She said this to plague her mother, and lessen Mrs. Gibson's exuberance of joy, it must be confessed; for her mind was pretty well made up. But it did not affect Mrs. Gibson, who affixed even less truth to it than there really was. The idea of a residence in a new, strange country, among new, strange people, was not without allurements to Cynthia.

"You always look nice, dear; but don't you think you had better put on that pretty lilac silk?"

"I shall not vary a thread or a shred from what I have got on now."

"You dear wilful creature! you know you always look lovely in whatever you put on." So, kissing her daughter, Mrs. Gibson left the room, intent on the lunch which should impress Mr. Henderson at once with an idea of family refinement.

Cynthia went upstairs to Molly; she was inclined to tell her about Mr. Henderson, but she found it impossible to introduce the subject naturally, so she left it to time to reveal the future as gradually as it might. Molly was tired with a bad night; and her father, in his flying visit to his darling before going out, had advised her to stay upstairs for the greater part of the morning, and to keep quiet in her own room till after her early dinner, so Time had not a fair chance of telling her what he had in store in his budget. Mrs. Gibson sent an apology to Molly for not paying her her usual morning visit, and told Cynthia to give Mr. Henderson's probable coming as a reason for her occupation downstairs. But Cynthia did no such thing. She kissed Molly, and sat silently by her, holding her hand; till at length she jumped up, and said, "You shall be left alone now, little one. I want you to be very well and very bright this afternoon: so rest now." And Cynthia left her, and went to her own room, locked the door, and began to think.

Some one was thinking about her at the same time, and it was not Mr. Henderson. Roger had heard from Mr. Gibson that Cynthia had come home, and he was resolving to go to her at once, and have one strong, manly attempt to overcome the obstacles, whatever they might be—and of their nature he was not fully aware—that she had conjured up against the continuance of their relation to each other. He left his father—he left them all—and went off into the woods, to be alone until the time came when he might mount his horse and ride over to put his fate to the touch. He was as careful as ever not to interfere with the morning hours that were tabooed to him of old; but waiting was very hard work when he knew that she was so near, and the time so near at hand.

Yet he rode slowly, compelling himself to quietness and patience when he was once really on the way to her.

"Mrs. Gibson at home? Miss Kirkpatrick?" he asked of the servant, Maria, who opened the door. She was confused, but he did not notice it.

"I think so; I am not sure! Will you walk up into the drawing-room, sir? Miss Gibson is there, I know."

So he went upstairs, all his nerves on one strain for the coming interview with Cynthia. It was either a relief or a disappointment, he was not sure which, to find only Molly in the room. Molly, half lying on the couch in the bow-window which commanded the garden; draped in soft white drapery, very white herself, and a laced half-handkerchief tied over her head to save her from any ill effects of the air that blew in through the open window. He was so ready to speak to Cynthia that he hardly knew what to say to any one else. *

"I am afraid you are not so well," he said to Molly, who sat up to receive him, and who suddenly began to tremble with emotion.

"I am a little tired, that's all," said she; and then she was quite silent, hoping that he might go, and yet somehow wishing him to stay. But he took a chair and placed it near her, opposite to the window. He thought that surely Maria would tell Miss Kirkpatrick that she was wanted, and that at any moment he might hear her light quick footstep on the stairs. He thought he ought to talk, but he could not think of anything to say. The pink flush came out on Molly's cheeks; once or twice she was on the point of speaking, but again she thought better of it; and the pauses between their faint disjointed remarks became longer and longer. Suddenly, in one of these pauses, the merry murmur of distant happy voices in the garden came nearer and nearer; Molly looked more and more uneasy and flushed, and in spite of herself kept watching Roger's face. He could see over her into the garden. A sudden deep colour overspread him, as if his heart had sent its blood out coursing at full gallop. Cynthia and Mr. Henderson had come in sight; he eagerly talking to her as he bent forward to look into her face; she, her looks half averted in pretty shyness, was evidently coquetting about some flowers, which she either would not give, or would not take. Just then, for the lovers had emerged from the shrubbery into comparatively public life, Maria was seen approaching; apparently she had feminine tact enough to induce Cynthia to leave her present admirer, and go a few steps to meet her to receive the whispered message that Mr. Roger Hamley was there, and wished to speak to her. Roger could see her startled gesture, she turned back to say something to Mr. Henderson before passing towards the house. Now Roger spoke to Molly—spoke hurriedly, spoke harshly.

"Molly, tell me! It is too late for me to speak to Cynthia? I came on purpose. Who is that man?"

"Mr. Henderson. He only came to-day—but now he is her accepted lover. Oh, Roger, forgive me the pain!"

"Tell her I have been, and am gone. Send out word to her. Don't let her be interrupted."

And Roger ran downstairs at full speed, and Molly heard the passionate clang of the outer door. He had hardly left the house before Cynthia entered the room, pale and resolute.

"Where is he?" she said, looking around, as if he might yet be hidden. *

"Gone!" said Molly, very faint.

"Gone. Oh, what a relief! It seems to be my fate never to be off with the old lover before I am on with the new, and yet I did write as decidedly as I could. Why, Molly, what's the matter?" for now Molly had fainted away utterly. Cynthia flew to the bell, summoned Maria, water, salts, wine, anything; and as soon as Molly, gasping and miserable, became conscious again, she wrote a little pencil-note to Mr. Henderson, bidding him return to the George, whence he had come in the morning, and saying that if he obeyed her at once, he might be allowed to call again in the evening, otherwise she would not see him till the next day. This she sent down by Maria, and the unlucky man never believed but that it was Miss Gibson's sudden indisposition in the first instance that had deprived him of his charmer's company. He comforted himself for the long solitary afternoon by writing to tell all his friends of his happiness and amongst them uncle and aunt Kirkpatrick, who received his letter at the same post as that discreet epistle of Mrs. Gibson's, which she had carefully arranged to reveal as much as she wished, and no more.

"Was he very terrible?" asked Cynthia, as she sat with Molly in the stillness of Mrs. Gibson's dressing-room.

"Oh, Cynthia, it was such pain to see him, he suffered so!"

"I don't like people of deep feelings," said Cynthia, pouting. "They don't suit me. Why could not he let me go without this fuss. I'm not worth his caring for!"

"You have the happy gift of making people love you. Remember Mr. Preston,—he too would not give up hope."

"Now I won't have you classing Roger Hamley and Mr. Preston together in the same sentence. One was as much too bad for me, as the other is too good. Now I hope that man in the garden is the *juste milieu*,—I'm that myself, for I don't think I'm vicious, and I know I'm not virtuous."

"Do you really like him enough to marry him?" asked Molly earnestly. "Do think, Cynthia. It won't do to go on throwing your lovers off; you give pain that I am sure you do not mean to do,—that you cannot understand."

"Perhaps I can't. I'm not offended. I never set up for what I am not, and I know I'm not constant. I have told Mr. Henderson so——" She stopped, blushing and smiling at the recollection.

"You have! and what did he say?"

"That he liked me just as I was; so you see he's fairly warned. Only he is a little afraid, I suppose,—for he wants me to be married very soon, almost directly in fact. But I don't know if I shall give way,—you hardly saw him, Molly,—but he's coming again to-night, and mind, I'll never forgive you if you don't think him very charming. I believe I cared for him when he offered all those months ago, but I tried to think I didn't; only sometimes I really was so unhappy, I thought I must put an iron-band round my heart to keep it from breaking, like the Faithful

John of the German story,—do you remember, Molly?—how when his master came to his crown and his fortune, and his lady-love, after innumerable trials and disgraces, and was driving away from the church where he'd been married in a coach and six, with Faithful John behind, the happy couple heard three great cracks in succession, and on inquiring, they were the iron-bands round his heart, that Faithful John had worn all during the time of his master's tribulation, to keep it from breaking."

In the evening Mr. Henderson came. Molly had been very curious to see him; and when she saw him she was not sure whether she liked him or not. He was handsome, without being conceited; gentlemanly, without being foolishly fine. He talked easily, and never said a silly thing. He was perfectly well-appointed, yet never seemed to have given a thought to his dress. He was good tempered and kind; not without some of the cheerful flippancy of repartee which belonged to his age and profession, and which his age and profession are apt to take for wit. But he wanted something in Molly's eyes, at any rate, in this first interview, and in her heart of hearts she thought him rather commonplace. But of course she said nothing of this to Cynthia, who was evidently as happy as she could be. Mrs. Gibson, too, was in the seventh heaven of ecstasy, and spoke but little; but what she did say, expressed the highest sentiments in the finest language. Mr. Gibson was not with them for long, but while he was there he was evidently studying the unconscious Mr. Henderson with his dark penetrating eyes. Mr. Henderson behaved exactly as he ought to have done to everybody; respectful to Mr. Gibson, deferential to Mrs. Gibson, friendly to Molly, devoted to Cynthia. The next time Mr. Gibson found Molly alone, he began,—

"Well! and how do you like the new relation that is to be?"

"It is difficult to say. I think he is very nice in all his bits, but—rather dull on the whole."

"I think him perfection," said Mr. Gibson, to Molly's surprise; but in an instant afterwards she saw that he had been speaking ironically. He went on. "I don't wonder she preferred him to Roger Hamley. Such scents! such gloves! And then his hair and his cravat!"

"Now, papa, you are not fair. He is a great deal more than that. One could see that he had very good feeling; and he is very handsome, and very much attached to her."

"So was Roger. However, I must confess I shall only be too glad to have her married. She is a girl who will always have some love-affair on hand, and will always be apt to slip through a man's fingers if he does not look sharp; as I was saying to Roger——"

"You have seen him, then, since he was here?"

"Met him in the street."

"How was he?"

"I don't suppose he had been going through the pleasantest thing in the world; but he'll get over it before long. He spoke with sense and resignation, and did not say much about it; but one could see that he

was feeling it pretty sharply. He's had three months to think it over, remember. The squire, I should guess, is showing more indignation. He is boiling over, that any one should reject his son! The enormity of the sin never seems to have been apparent to him till now, when he sees how Roger is affected by it. Indeed, with the exception of myself, I don't know one reasonable father; eh, Molly?"

Whatever else Mr. Henderson might be, he was an impatient lover; he wanted to marry Cynthia directly—next week—the week after. At any rate before the long vacation, so that they could go abroad at once. Trousseaux, and preliminary ceremonies, he gave to the winds. Mr. Gibson, generous as usual, called Cynthia aside a morning or two after her engagement, and put a hundred-pound note into her hands.

"There! that's to pay your expenses to Russia and back. I hope you'll find your pupils obedient."

To his surprise, and rather to his discomfiture, Cynthia threw her arms round his neck and kissed him.

"You are the kindest person I know," said she; "and I don't know how to thank you in words."

"If you tumble my shirt-collars again in that way, I'll charge you for the washing. Just now, too, when I'm trying so hard to be trim and elegant, like your Mr. Henderson."

"But you do like him, don't you?" said Cynthia, pleadingly. "He does so like you."

"Of course. We are all angels just now, and you are an arch-angel. I hope he'll wear as well as Roger."

Cynthia looked grave. "That was a very silly affair," she said. "We were two as unsuitable people——"

"It has ended, and that's enough. Besides, I've no more time to waste; and there is your smart young man coming here in all haste."

Mr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick sent all manner of congratulations; and Mrs. Gibson, in a private letter, assured Mrs. Kirkpatrick that her ill-timed confidence about Roger should be considered as quite private. For as soon as Mr. Henderson had made his appearance in Hollingford, she had written a second letter, entreating them not to allude to anything she might have said in her first; which she said was written in such excitement on discovering the real state of her daughter's affections, that she had hardly known what she had said, and had exaggerated some things, and misunderstood others; all that she did know now was, that Mr. Henderson had just proposed to Cynthia, and was accepted, and that they were as happy as the day was long, and ("excuse the vanity of a mother,") made a most lovely couple. So Mr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick wrote back an equally agreeable letter, praising Mr. Henderson, admiring Cynthia, and generally congratulatory; insisting into the bargain that the marriage should take place from their house in Hyde Park Street, and that Mr. and Mrs. Gibson and Molly should all come up and pay them a visit. There was a little postscript at the end, "Surely you do not mean the famous traveller,

Hamley, about whose discoveries all our scientific men are so much excited. You speak of him as a young Hamley, who went to Africa. Answer this question, pray, for Helen is most anxious to know." This P.S. being in Helen's handwriting. In her exultation at the general success of everything, and desire for sympathy, Mrs. Gibson read parts of this letter to Molly; the postscript among the rest. It made a deeper impression on Molly than even the proposed kindness of the visit to London.

There were some family consultations; but the end of them all was that the Kirkpatrick invitation was accepted. There were many small reasons for this, which were openly acknowledged; but there was one general and unspoken wish to have the ceremony performed out of the immediate neighbourhood of the two men whom Cynthia had previously rejected; that was the word now to be applied to her treatment of them. So Molly was ordered and enjoined and entreated to become strong as soon as possible, in order that her health might not prevent her attending the marriage. Mr. Gibson himself, though he thought it his duty to damp the excellent anticipations of his wife and her daughter, being not at all averse to the prospect of going to London, and seeing half-a-dozen old friends, and many scientific exhibitions, independently of the very fair amount of liking which he had for his host, Mr. Kirkpatrick himself.

CHAPTER LVII.

BRIDAL VISITS AND ADIEUX.

THE whole town of Hollingsford came to congratulate and inquire into particulars. Some indeed—Mrs. Goodenough at the head of this class of malcontents—thought that they were defrauded of their right to a fine show by Cynthia's being married in London. Even Lady Cumnor was moved into action. She, who had hardly ever paid calls "out of her own sphere," who had only once been to see "Clare" in her own house—she came to congratulate after her fashion. Maria had only just time to run up into the drawing-room, one morning, and say,—

"Please, ma'am, the great carriage from the Towers is coming up to the gate, and my lady the Countess is sitting inside." It was but eleven o'clock, and Mrs. Gibson would have been indignant at any commiserator who had ventured to call at such an untimely hour, but in the case of the Peerage the rules of domestic morality were relaxed.

The family "stood at arms," as it were, till Lady Cumnor appeared in the drawing-room; and then she had to be settled in the best chair, and the light adjusted before anything like conversation began. She was the first to speak; and Lady Harriet, who had begun a few words to Molly, dropped into silence.

"I have been taking Mary—Lady Cuxhaven—to the railway station, on

this new line between Birmingham and London, and I thought I would come on here, and offer you my congratulations. Clare, which is the young lady?"—putting up her glasses, and looking at Cynthia and Molly, who were dressed pretty much alike. "I did not think it would be amiss to give you a little advice, my dear," said she, when Cynthia had been properly pointed out to her as bride elect. "I have heard a good deal about you; and I am only too glad, for your mother's sake,—your mother is a very worthy woman, and did her duty very well while she was in our family—I am truly rejoiced, I say, to hear that you are going to make so creditable a marriage. I hope it will efface your former errors of conduct—which, we will hope, were but trivial in reality—and that you will live to be a comfort to your mother,—for whom both Lord Cumnor and I entertain a very sincere regard. But you must conduct yourself with discretion in whatever state of life it pleases God to place you, whether married or single. You must reverence your husband, and conform to his opinion in all things. Look up to him as your head, and do nothing without consulting him."—It was as well that Lord Cumnor was not amongst the audience; or he might have compared precept with practice.—"Keep strict accounts; and remember your station in life. I understand that Mr. ——" looking about for some help as to the name she had forgotten—"Henderson—Henderson is in the law. Although there is a general prejudice against attorneys, I have known of two or three who are very respectable men; and I am sure Mr. Henderson is one, or your good mother and our old friend Gibson would not have sanctioned the engagement."

"He is a barrister," put in Cynthia, unable to restrain herself any longer. "Barrister-at-law."

"Ah, yes. Attorney-at-law. Barrister-at-law. I understand without your speaking so loud, my dear. What was I going to say before you interrupted me? When you have been a little in society you will find that it is reckoned bad manners to interrupt. I had a great deal more to say to you, and you have put it all out of my head. There was something else your father wanted me to ask—what was it, Harriet?"

"I suppose you mean about Mr. Hamley!"

"Oh, yes! we are intending to have the house full of Lord Hollingsford's friends next month, and Lord Cumnor is particularly anxious to secure Mr. Hamley."

"The squire?" asked Mrs. Gibson in some surprise. Lady Cumnor bowed slightly, as much as to say, "If you did not interrupt me I should explain."

"The famous traveller—the scientific Mr. Hamley, I mean. I imagine he is son to the squire. Lord Hollingsford knows him well; but when we asked him before, he declined coming, and assigned no reason."

Had Roger indeed been asked to the Towers and declined? Mrs. Gibson could not understand it. Lady Cumnor went on—

"Now this time we are particularly anxious to secure him, and my son

Lord Hollingford will not return to England until the very week before the Duke of Atherstone is coming to us. I believe Mr. Gibson is very intimate with Mr. Hamley; do you think he could induce him to favour us with his company?"

And this from the proud Lady Cumnor; and the object of it Roger Hamley, whom she had all but turned out of her drawing-room two years ago for calling at an untimely hour, and whom Cynthia had turned out of her heart. Mrs. Gibson was surprised, and could only murmur out that she was sure Mr. Gibson would do all that her ladyship wished.

"Thank you. You know me well enough to be aware that I am not the person, nor is the Towers the house, to go about soliciting guests. But in this instance I bend my head; high rank should always be the first to honour those who have distinguished themselves by art or science."

"Besides, mamma," said Lady Harriet, "papa was saying that the Hamleys have been on their land since before the Conquest; while we only came into the country a century ago; and there is a tale that the first Cumnor began his fortune through selling tobacco in King James's reign."

If Lady Cumnor did not exactly shift her trumpet and take snuff there on the spot, she behaved in an equivalent manner. She began a low-toned but nevertheless authoritative conversation with Clare about the details of the wedding, which lasted until she thought it fit to go, when she abruptly plucked Lady Harriet up, and carried her off in the very midst of a description she was giving to Cynthia about the delights of Spa, which was to be one of the resting-places of the newly-married couple on their wedding-tour.

Nevertheless she prepared a handsome present for the bride: a Bible and a Prayer-book bound in velvet with silver-clasps; and also a collection of household account-books, at the beginning of which Lady Cumnor wrote down with her own hand the proper weekly allowance of bread, butter, eggs, meat, and groceries per head, with the London prices of the articles, so that the most inexperienced housekeeper might ascertain if her expenditure exceeded her means, as she expressed herself in the note which she sent with the handsome, dull present.

"If you are driving into Hollingford, Harriet, perhaps you will take these books to Miss Kirkpatrick," said Lady Cumnor, after she had sealed her note with all the straitness and correctness befitting a countess of her immaculate character. "I understand they are all going up to London to-morrow for this wedding, in spite of what I said to Clare of the duty of being married in one's own parish-church. She told me at the time that she entirely agreed with me, but that her husband had such a strong wish for a visit to London, that she did not know how she could oppose him consistently with her wifely duty. I advised her to repeat to him my reasons for thinking that they would be ill-advised to have the marriage in town; but I am afraid she has been overruled. That was her one great fault when she lived with us; she was always so yielding, and never knew how to say 'No.'"

"Mamma!" said Lady Harriet, with a little sly coaxing in her tone. "Do you think you would have been so fond of her, if she had opposed you, and said 'No,' when you wished her to say 'Yes?'"

"To be sure I should, my dear. I like everybody to have an opinion of their own; only when my opinions are based on thought and experience, which few people have had equal opportunities of acquiring, I think it is but proper deference in others to allow themselves to be convinced. In fact, I think it is only obstinacy which keeps them from acknowledging that they are. I am not a despot, I hope?" she asked, with some anxiety.

"If you are, dear mamma," said Lady Harriet, kissing the stern uplifted face very fondly, "I like a despotism better than a republic, and I must be very despotical over my ponies, for it is already getting very late for my drive round by Ash-holt."

But when she arrived at the Gibsons', she was detained so long there by the state of the family, that she had to give up her going to Ash-holt.

Molly was sitting in the drawing-room pale and trembling, and keeping herself quiet only by a strong effort. She was the only person there when Lady Harriet entered; the room was all in disorder, strewn with presents and paper, and pasteboard boxes, and half-displayed articles of finery.

"You look like Marius sitting amidst the ruins of Carthage, my dear! What's the matter? Why have you got on that woe-begone face? This marriage is not broken off, is it? Though nothing would surprise me where the beautiful Cynthia is concerned."

"Oh, no! that's all right. But I have caught a fresh cold, and papa says he thinks I had better not go to the wedding."

"Poor little one! And it's the first visit to London too!"

"Yes. But what I most care for is the not being with Cynthia to the last; and then, papa"—she stopped, for she could hardly go on without open crying, and she did not want to do that. Then she cleared her voice. "Papa!" she continued, "has so looked forward to this holiday,—and seeing—and—and going—oh! I can't tell you where; but he has quite a

fortable to leave me all alone for more than three days,—two for travelling, and one for the wedding." Just then Mrs. Gibson came in, ruffled too after her fashion, though the presence of Lady Harriet was wonderfully soothing.

"My dear Lady Harriet—how kind of you! Ah, yes, I see this poor unfortunate child has been telling you of her ill-luck; just when everything was going on so beautifully; I am sure it was that open window at your back, Molly,—you know you would persist that it could do you no harm, and now you see the mischief! I am sure I shan't be able to enjoy myself—and at my only child's wedding too,—without you; for I can't think of leaving you without Maria. I would rather sacrifice anything myself than think of you, uncared for, and alone at home."

"I am sure Molly is as sorry as any one," said Lady Harriet.

"No. I don't think she is," said Mrs. Gibson, with happy disregard of the chronology of events, "or she would not have sat with her back to an open window the day before yesterday, when I told her not. But it can't be helped now. Papa too—but it is my duty to make the best of everything, and look at the cheerful side of life. I wish I could persuade her to do the same" (turning and addressing Lady Harriet). "But you see it is a great mortification to a girl of her age to lose her first visit to London."

"It is not that," began Molly; but Lady Harriet made her a little sign to be silent while she herself spoke.

"Now, Clara! you and I can manage it all, I think, if you will but help me in a plan I have got in my head. Mr. Gibson shall stay as long as ever he can in London; and Molly shall be well cared for, and have some change of air and scene too, which is really what she needs as much as anything, in my poor opinion. I can't spirit her to the wedding and give her a sight of London; but I can carry her off to the Towers, and invite her myself; and send daily bulletins up to London, so that Mr. Gibson may feel quite at ease, and stay with you as long as you like. What do you say to it, Clara?"

"Oh, I could not go," said Molly; "I should only be a trouble to everybody."

"Nobody asked you for your opinion, little one. If we wise elders decide that you are to go, you must submit in silence."

Meanwhile Mrs. Gibson was rapidly balancing advantages and disadvantages. Amongst the latter, jealousy came in predominant. Amongst the former,—it would sound well; Maria could then accompany Cynthia and herself as "their maid,"—Mr. Gibson would stay longer with her, and it was always desirable to have a man at her beck and call in such a place as London; besides that, this identical man was gentlemanly and good-looking, and a favourite with her prosperous brother-in-law. The scales had it.

"What a charming plan! I cannot think of anything kinder or pleasanter for this poor darling. Only—what will Lady Cunnor say? I am modest for my family as much as for myself," she continued.

"You know mamma's sense of hospitality is never more gratified than when the house is quite full; and papa is just like her. Besides she is fond of you, and grateful to our good Mr. Gibson, and will be fond of you, little one, when she knows you as I do."

Molly's heart sank within her at the prospect. Excepting on the one evening of her father's wedding-day, she had never even seen the outside of the Towers since that unhappy day in her childhood when she had fallen asleep on Clara's bed. She had a dread of the countess, a dislike to her house, only it seemed as if it was a solution to the problem of what to do with her, which had been perplexing every one all morning, and so suddenly that it had caused her much distress. She kept!

her lips quivered from time to time. Oh, if Miss Brownings had not chosen this very time of all others to pay their monthly visit to Miss Hornblower ! if she could only have gone there, and lived with them in their quaint, quiet, primitive way, instead of having to listen, without remonstrance, to hearing plans discussed about her, as if she was an inanimate chattel.

"She shall have the south pink room, opening out of mine by one door, you remember ; and the dressing-room shall be made into a cozy little sitting-room for her, in case she likes to be by herself. Parkes shall attend upon her, and I am sure Mr. Gibson must know Parkes's powers as a nurse by this time. We shall have all manner of agreeable people in the house to amuse her downstairs ; and when she has got rid of this access of cold, I will drive her out every day, and write daily bulletins, as I said. Pray tell Mr. Gibson all that, and let it be considered as settled. I will come for her in the close carriage to-morrow, at eleven. And now may I see the lovely bride elect, and give her mamma's present, and my own good wishes ? "

So Cynthia came in, and demurely received the very proper present, and the equally coveted congratulations, without testifying any very great delight or gratitude at either ; for she was quite quick enough to detect there was no great afflux of affection accompanying either. But when she heard her mother quickly recapitulating all the details of the plan for Molly, Cynthia's eyes did sparkle with gladness ; and almost to Lady Harriet's surprise, she thanked her as if she had conferred a personal favour upon her, Cynthia. Lady Harriet saw, too, that in a very quiet way, she had taken Molly's hand, and was holding it all the time, as if loth to think of their approaching separation—somehow, she and Lady Harriet were brought nearer together by this little action than they had ever been before.

Molly had hoped that her father might have raised some obstacles to the project : she was disappointed. But, indeed, she did not when she perceived how he seemed to feel that, by placing her under the care of Lady Harriet and Parkes, he should be relieved from anxiety ; and now he spoke of this change of air and scene as being the very thing he had been wishing to secure for her : country air, and absence of excitement as this would be ; for the only other place where he could have secured her these advantages, and at the same time sent her as an invalid, was to Hamley Hall ; and he dreaded the associations there with the beginning of her present illness.

So Molly was driven off in state the next day, leaving her own home all in confusion with the assemblage of boxes and trunks in the hall, and all the other symptoms of the approaching departure of the family for London and the wedding. All the morning Cynthia had been with her in her room, attending to the arrangement of Molly's clothes, instructing her what to wear with what, and rejoicing over the pretty smartnesses, which, having been prepared for her as bridesmaid, were now to serve as adornments for her visit to the Towers. Both Molly and Cynthia spoke

about dress as if it was the very object of their lives ; for each dreaded the introduction of more serious subjects ; Cynthia more for Molly than herself. Only when the carriage was announced, and Molly was preparing to go downstairs, Cynthia said,—

"I am not going to thank you, Molly, or to tell you how I love you."

"Don't," said Molly, "I can't bear it."

"Only you know you're to be my first visitor, and if you wear brown ribbons to a green gown, I'll turn you out of the house !" So they parted. Mr. Gibson was there in the hall to hand Molly in. He had ridden hard ; and was now giving her two or three last injunctions as to her health.

"Think of us on Thursday," said he. "I declare I don't know which of her three lovers she may not summon at the very last moment to act the part of bridegroom. I'm determined to be surprised at nothing ; and will give her away with a good grace to whoever comes."

They drove away, and until they were out of sight of the house, Molly had enough to do to keep returning the kisses of the hand waisted to her by her stepmother out of the drawing-room window, while at the same time her eyes were fixed on a white handkerchief fluttering out of the attic from which she herself had watched Roger's departure nearly two years before. What changes time had brought !

When Molly arrived at the Towers she was convoyed into Lady Cumnor's presence by Lady Harriet. It was a mark of respect to the lady of the house, which the latter knew that her mother would expect ; but she was anxious to get it over, and take Molly up into the room which she had been so busy in arranging for her. Lady Cumnor was, however, very kind, if not positively gracious.

"You are Lady Harriet's visitor, my dear," said she, "and I hope she will take good care of you. If not, come and complain of her to me." It was as near an approach to a joke as Lady Cumnor ever perpetrated, and from it Lady Harriet knew that her mother was pleased by Molly's manners and appearance.

"Now, here you are in your own kingdom ; and into this room I shan't venture to come without express permission. Here is the last new Quarterly, and the last new novel, and the last new essay. Now, my dear, you need not come down again to-day unless you like it. Parkes shall bring you everything and anything you want. You must get strong as fast as you can, for all sorts of great and famous people are coming to-morrow and the next day, and I think you'll like to see them. Suppose for to-day you only come down to lunch, and if you like it, in the evening. Dinner is such a wearily long meal, if one is not strong ; and you would not miss much, for there is only my cousin Charles in the house now, and he is the personification of sensible silence."

Molly was only too glad to allow Lady Harriet to decide everything for her. It had begun to rain, and was, altogether, a gloomy day for August ; and there was a small fire of scented wood burning cheerfully in

the sitting-room appropriated to her. High up, it commanded a wide and pleasant view over the park, and from it could be seen the spire of Hellingford Church, which gave Molly a pleasant idea of neighbourhood to home. She was left alone, lying on the sofa—books near her, wood crackling and blazing, wafts of wind bringing the beating rain against the window, and so enhancing the sense of indoor comfort by the outdoor contrast. Parkes was unpacking for her. Lady Harriet had introduced Parkes to Molly by saying, "Now, Molly, this is Mrs. Parkes, the only person I ever am afraid of. She scolds me if I dirty myself with my paints, just as if I was a little child; and she makes me go to bed when I want to sit up,"—Parkes was smiling grimly all the time;—"so to get rid of her tyranny I give her you as victim. Parkes, rule over Miss Gibson with a rod of iron; make her eat and drink, and rest and sleep, and dress as you think wisest and best."

Parkes had begun her reign by putting Molly on the sofa, and saying, "If you will give me your keys, Miss, I will unpack your things, and let you know when it is time for me to arrange your hair, preparatory to luncheon." For if Lady Harriet used familiar colloquialisms from time to time, she certainly had not learnt it from Parkes, who piqued herself on the correctness of her language.

When Molly went down to lunch she found "cousin Charles," with his aunt, Lady Cumnor. He was a certain Sir Charles Merton, the son of Lady Cumnor's only sister: a plain, sandy-haired man of thirty-five or so; immensely rich, very sensible, awkward, and reserved. He had had a chronic attachment, of many years' standing, to his cousin, Lady Harriet, who did not care for him in the least, although it was the marriage very earnestly desired for her by her mother. Lady Harriet was, however, on friendly terms with him, ordered him about, and told him what to do, and what to leave undone, without having even a doubt as to the willingness of his obedience. She had given him his cue about Molly.

"Now, Charles, the girl wants to be interested and amused without having to take any trouble for herself; she is too delicate to be very active either in mind or body. Just look after her when the house gets full, and place her where she can hear and see everything and everybody, without any fuss and responsibility."

So Sir Charles began this day at luncheon by taking Molly under his quiet protection. He did not say much to her; but what he did say was thoroughly friendly and sympathetic; and Molly began, as he and Lady Harriet intended that she should, to have a kind of pleasant reliance on him. Then in the evening while the rest of the family were at supper after Molly's tea and hour of quiet repose, Parkes came and showed some of the new clothes prepared for her in some new and pretty way, so that when Molly, her eyes full of tears, she scarcely knew what she was thinking of, which, as an

dreams ever since her childhood. At the further end sat Lady Cuthnor at her tapestry work ; the light of fire and candle seemed all concentrated on that one bright part where presently Lady Harriet made tea, and Lord Cumnor went to sleep, and Sir Charles read passages aloud from the *Edinburgh Review* to the three ladies at their work.

When Molly went to bed she was constrained to admit that staying at the Towers as a visitor was rather pleasant than otherwise ; and she tried to reconcile old impressions with new ones, until she fell asleep. There was another comparatively quiet day before the expected guests began to arrive in the evening. Lady Harriet took Molly a drive in her little pony-carriage ; and for the first time for many weeks Molly began to feel the delightful spring of returning health ; the dance of youthful spirits in the fresh air cleared by the previous day's rain.

CHAPTER LVIII.

REVIVING HOPES AND BRIGHTENING PROSPECTS.

"If you can without fatigue, dear, do come down to dinner to-day ; you'll then see the people one by one as they appear, instead of having to encounter a crowd of strangers. Hollingford will be here too. I hope you'll find it pleasant."

So Molly made her appearance at dinner that day ; and got to know, by sight at least, some of the most distinguished of the visitors at the Towers. The next day was Thursday, Cynthia's wedding-day ; bright and fine in the country, whatever it might be in London. And there were several letters from the home-people awaiting Molly when she came downstairs to the late breakfast. For every day, every hour, she was gaining strength and health, and she was unwilling to continue her invalid habits any longer than was necessary. She looked so much better that Sir Charles noticed it to Lady Harriet ; and several of the visitors spoke of her this morning as a very pretty, lady-like, and graceful girl. This was Thursday ; on Friday, as Lady Harriet had told her, some visitors from the more immediate neighbourhood were expected to stay over the Sunday ; but she had not mentioned their names, and when Molly went down into the drawing-room before dinner, she was almost startled by perceiving Roger Hamley in the centre of a group of gentlemen, who were all talking together eagerly, and, as it seemed to her, making him the object of attention. He made a hitch in his conversation, lost the precise meaning of a question addressed to him, answered it rather hastily, and made his way to where Molly was sitting, a little behind Lady Harriet. He had heard that she was staying at the Towers, but he was almost as much surprised as she was by his unexpected appearance, for he had only seen her once or twice since his return from Africa, and then in the guise of an

New in her pretty evening dress, with her hair beautifully

dressed, her delicate complexion flushed a little with timidity, yet her movements and manners bespeaking quiet ease, Roger hardly recognised her, although he acknowledged her identity. He began to feel that admiring deference which most young men experience when conversing with a very pretty girl : a sort of desire to obtain her good opinion in a manner very different to his old familiar friendliness. He was annoyed when Sir Charles, whose especial charge she still was, came up to take her in to dinner. He could not quite understand the smile of mutual intelligence that passed between the two, each being aware of Lady Harriet's plan of sheltering Molly from the necessity of talking, and acting in conformity with her wishes as much as with their own. Roger found himself puzzling, and watching them from time to time during dinner. Again in the evening he sought her out, but found her again pre-occupied with one of the young men staying in the house, who had had the advantage of two days of mutual interest, and acquaintance with the daily events and jokes and anxieties of the family-circle. Molly could not help wishing to break off all this trivial talk and to make room for Roger : she had so much to ask him about everything at the Hall ; he was, and had been such a stranger to them all for these last two months, and more. But though each wanted to speak to the other more than to any one else in the room, it so happened that everything seemed to conspire to prevent it. Lord Hollingford carried off Roger to the clatter of middle-aged men ; he was wanted to give his opinion upon some scientific subject. Mr. Ernest Watson, the young man referred to above, kept his place by Molly, as the prettiest girl in the room, and almost dazed her by his never-ceasing flow of clever small-talk. She looked so tired and pale at last that the ever-watchful Lady Harriet sent Sir Charles to the rescue, and after a few words with Lady Harriet, Roger saw Molly quietly leave the room ; and a sentence or two which he heard Lady Harriet address to her cousin made him know that it was for the night. Those sentences might bear another interpretation to the obvious one.

"Really, Charles, considering that she is in your charge, I think you might have saved her from the chatter and patter of Mr. Watson ; I can only stand it when I am in the strongest health."

Why was Molly in Sir Charles' charge ? why ? Then Roger remembered many little things that might serve to confirm the fancy he had got into his head ; and he went to bed puzzled and annoyed. It seemed to him such an incongruous, hastily-got-up sort of engagement, if engagement it really was. On Saturday they were more fortunate ; they had a long *tête-à-tête* in the most public place in the house—on a sofa in the hall where Molly was resting at Lady Harriet's command before going upstairs after a walk. Roger was passing through, and saw her, and came to her. Standing before her, and making pretence of playing with the gold-fish in a great marble basin close at hand,—

"I was very unlucky," said he. "I wanted to get near you last night, but it was quite impossible. You were so busy talking to Mr. Watson,

until Sir Charles Morton came and carried you off—with such an air of authority ! Have you known him long ? ”

Now this was not at all the manner in which Roger had pre-determined that he would speak of Sir Charles to Molly ; but the words came out in spite of himself.

“ No ! not long. I never saw him before I came here—on Tuesday. But Lady Harriet told him to see that I did not get tired, for I wanted to come down ; but you know I have not been strong. He is a cousin of Lady Harriet’s, and does all she tells him to do.”

“ Oh ! he is not handsome ; but I believe he is a very sensible man.”

“ Yes ! I should think so. He is so silent though, that I can hardly judge.”

“ He bears a very high character in the county,” said Roger, willing now to give him his full due.

Molly stood up.

“ I must go upstairs,” she said ; “ I only sat down here for a minute or two because Lady Harriet bade me.”

“ Stop a little longer,” said he. “ This is really the pleasantest place ; this basin of water-lilies gives one the idea, if not the sensation, of coolness ; besides—it seems so long since I saw you, and I have a message from my father to give you. He is very angry with you.”

“ Angry with me ? ” said Molly, in surprise.

“ Yes ! He heard that you had come here for change of air ; and he was offended that you had not come to us—to the Hall, instead. He said that you should have remembered old friends ! ”

Molly took all this quite gravely, and did not at first notice the smile on his face.

“ Oh ! I am so sorry ! ” said she. “ But will you please tell him how it all happened. Lady Harriet called the very day when it was settled that I was not to go to——” Cynthia’s wedding she was going to add, but she suddenly stopped short, and, blushing deeply, changed the expression, “ go to London, and she planned it all in a minute, and convinced mamma and papa, and had her own way. There was really no resisting her.”

“ I think you will have to tell all this to my father yourself, if you mean to make your peace. Why can you not come on to the Hall when you leave the Towers ? ”

To go in the cool manner suggested from one house to another, after the manner of a royal progress, was not at all according to Molly’s primitive home-keeping notions. She made answer,—

“ I should like it very much, some time. But I must go home first. They will want me more than ever now——”

Again she felt herself touching on a sore subject, and stopped short. Roger became annoyed at her so constantly conjecturing what he must be feeling on the subject of Cynthia’s marriage. With sympathetic perception she had discerned that the idea must give him pain ; and perhaps she also knew that he would dislike to shew the pain : but she had not

the presence of mind or ready wit to give a skilful turn to the conversation. All this annoyed Roger, he could hardly tell why. He determined to take the metaphorical bull by the horns. Until that was done, his footing with Molly would always be insecure; as it always is between two friends, who mutually avoid a subject to which their thoughts perpetually recur.

"Ah, yes!" said he. "Of course you must be of double importance now Miss Kirkpatrick has left you. I saw her marriage in *The Times* yesterday."

His tone of voice was changed in speaking of her, but her name had been named between them, and that was the great thing to accomplish.

"Still," he continued, "I think I must urge my father's claim for a short visit, and all the more, because I can really see the apparent improvement in your health since I came,—only yesterday. Besides, Molly," it was the old familiar Roger of former days who spoke now, "I think you could help us at home. Aimée is shy and awkward with my father, and he has never taken quite kindly to her,—yet I know they would like and value each other, if some one could but bring them together,—and it would be such a comfort to me if this could take place before I have to leave."

"To leave—are you going away again?"

"Yes. Have you not heard? I did not complete my engagement. I am going again in September for six months."

"I remember. But somehow I fancied—you seemed to have settled down into the old way at the Hall."

"So my father appears to think. But it is not likely I shall ever make it my home again; and that is partly the reason why I want my father to adopt the notion of Aimée's living with him. Ah, here are all the people coming back from their walk. However, I shall see you again: perhaps this afternoon we may get a little quiet time, for I have a great deal to consult you about."

They separated then, and Molly went upstairs very happy, very full and warm at her heart; it was so pleasant to have Roger talking to her in this way, like a friend; she had once thought that she could never look upon the great brown-bearded celebrity in the former light of almost brotherly intimacy, but now it was all coming right. There was no opportunity for renewed confidences that afternoon. Molly went a quiet decorous drive as fourth with two dowagers and one spinster; but it was very pleasant to think that she should see him again at dinner, and again to-morrow. On the Sunday evening, as they all were sitting and idling on the lawn before dinner, Roger went on with what he had to say about the position of his sister-in-law in his father's house: the mutual bond between the mother and grandfather being the child; who was also, through jealousy, the bone of contention and the severance. There were many little details to be given in order to make Molly quite understand the difficulty of the situation on both sides; and the young man did the

girl became absorbed in what they were talking about, and wandered away into the shade of the long avenue. Lady Harriet separated herself from a group and came up to Lord Hollingford, who was sauntering a little apart, and putting her arm within his with the familiarity of a favourite sister, she said,—

"Don't you think that your pattern young man, and my favourite young woman, are finding out each other's good qualities?"

He had not been observing as she had been.

"Who do you mean?" said he.

"Look along the avenue; who are those?"

"Mr. Hamley and—is it not Miss Gibson? I can't quite make out. Oh! if you're letting your fancy run off in that direction, I can tell you it's quite waste of time. Roger Hamley is a man who will soon have an European reputation!"

"That's very possible, and yet it does not make any difference in my opinion. Molly Gibson is capable of appreciating him."

"She is a very pretty, good little country-girl. I don't mean to say anything against her, but——"

"Remember the Charity Ball; you called her 'unusually intelligent' after you had danced with her there. But after all we are like the genie and the fairy in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, who each cried up the merits of the Prince Caramalzaman and the Princess Badoura."

"Hamley is not a marrying man."

"How do you know?"

"I know that he has very little private fortune, and I know that science is not a remunerative profession, if profession it can be called."

"Oh, if that's all—a hundred things may happen—some one may leave him a fortune—or this tiresome little heir that nobody wanted, may die."

"Hush, Harriet, that's the worst of allowing yourself to plan far ahead for the future; you are sure to contemplate the death of some one, and to reckon upon the contingency as affecting events."

"As if lawyers were not always doing something of the kind!"

"Leave it to those to whom it is necessary. I dislike planning marriages or looking forward to deaths about equally."

"You are getting very prosaic and tiresome, Hollingford!"

"Only getting!" said he smiling. "I thought you had always looked upon me as a tiresome matter-of-fact fellow."

"Now, if you're going to fish for a compliment, I am gone. Only remember my prophecy when my vision comes to pass; or make a bet, and whoever wins shall spend the money on a present to Prince Caramalzaman or Princess Badoura, as the case may be."

Lord Hollingford remembered his sister's words as he heard Roger say to Molly as he was leaving the Towers on the following day,—

"Then I may tell my father that you will come and pay him a visit next week? You don't know what pleasure it will give him." He had

been on the point of saying "will give us," but he had an instinct which told him it was as well to consider Molly's promised visit as exclusively made to his father.

The next day Molly went home; she was astonished at herself for being so sorry to leave the Towers; and found it difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile the long-fixed idea of the house as a place wherein to suffer all a child's tortures of dismay and forlornness with her new and fresh conception. She had gained health, she had had pleasure, the faint fragrance of a new and unacknowledged hope had stolen into her life. No wonder that Mr. Gibson was struck with the improvement in her looks, and Mrs. Gibson impressed with her increased grace.

"Ah, Molly," said she, "it's really wonderful to see what a little good society will do for a girl. Even a week of association with such people as one meets with at the Towers is, as somebody said of a lady of rank whose name I have forgotten, 'a polite education in itself.' There is something quite different about you—a *je ne sais quoi*—that would tell me at once that you have been mingling with the aristocracy. With all her charms, it was what my darling Cynthia wanted; not that Mr. Henderson thought so, for a more devoted lover can hardly be conceived. He absolutely bought her a parure of diamonds. I was obliged to say to him that I had studied to preserve her simplicity of taste, and that he must not corrupt her with too much luxury. But I was rather disappointed at their going off without a maid. It was the one blemish in the arrangements, the spot in the sun. Dear Cynthia, when I think of her, I do assure you, Molly, I make it my nightly prayer that I may be able to find you just such another husband. And all this time you have never told me who you met at the Towers?"

Molly ran over a list of names. Roger Hamley's came last.

"Upon my word! That young man is pushing his way up!"

"The Hamleys are a far older family than the Cumnors," said Molly, flushing up.

"Now, Molly, I can't have you democratic. Rank is a great distinction. It is quite enough to have dear papa with democratic tendencies. But we won't begin to quarrel. Now that you and I are left alone we ought to be bosom friends, and I hope we shall be. Roger Hamley did not say much about that unfortunate little Osborne Hamley, I suppose."

"On the contrary. He says his father dotes on the child; and he seemed very proud of him, himself."

"I thought the squire must be getting very much infatuated with something. I daresay the French mother takes care of that. Why! he has scarcely taken any notice of you for this month or more, and before that you were everything." *

It was about six weeks since Cynthia's engagement had become publicly known, and that might have had something to do with the squire's desertion, Molly thought. But she said,—

"The squire has sent me an invitation to go and stay there next week."

if you have no objection, mamma. They seem to want a companion for Mrs. Osborne Hamley, who is not very strong."

"I can hardly tell what to say,—I don't like your having to associate with a Frenchwoman of doubtful rank; and I can't bear the thought of losing my child—my only daughter now. I did ask Helen Kirkpatrick, but she can't come for some time; and the house is going to be altered. Papa has consented to build me another room at last, for Cynthia and Mr. Henderson will, of course, come and see us; we shall have many more visitors, I expect, and your bedroom will make a capital lumber-room; and Maria wants a week's holiday. I am always so unwilling to put any obstacles in the way of any one's pleasure,—weakly unwilling, I believe,—but it certainly would be very convenient to have you out of the house for a few days; so, for once, I will waive my own wish for your companionship, and plead your cause with papa."

Miss Brownings came to call and hear the double batch of news. Mrs. Goodenough had come the very day on which they had returned from Miss Hornblower's, to tell them the astounding fact of Molly Gibson having gone on a visit to the Towers; not to come back at night, but to sleep there, to be there for two or three days, just as if she was a young lady of quality. So Miss Browning came to hear all the details of the wedding from Mrs. Gibson, and the history of Molly's visit at the Towers as well. But Mrs. Gibson did not like this divided interest, and some of her old jealousy of Molly's intimacy at the Towers had returned.

"Now, Molly," said Miss Browning, "let us hear how you behaved among the great folks. You must not be set up with all their attention; remember that they pay it to you for your good father's sake."

"Molly is, I think, quite aware," put in Mrs. Gibson, in her most soft and languid tone, "that she owes her privilege of visiting at such a house to Lady Cumnor's kind desire to set my mind quite at liberty at the time of Cynthia's marriage. As soon as ever I had returned home, Molly came back; indeed I should not have thought it right to let her intrude upon their kindness beyond what was absolutely necessary."

Molly felt extremely uncomfortable at all this, although perfectly aware of the entire inaccuracy of the statement.

"Well, but, Molly!" said Miss Browning, "never mind whether you went there on your own merits, or your worthy father's merits, or Mrs. Gibson's merits; but tell us what you did when you were there."

So Molly began an account of their sayings and doings, which she could have made far more interesting to Miss Browning and Miss Phoebe if she had not been conscious of her stepmother's critical listening. She had to tell it all with a mental squint; the surest way to spoil a narration. She was also subject to Mrs. Gibson's perpetual corrections of little statements which she knew to be facts. But what vexed her most of all was Mrs. Gibson's last speech before the Miss Brownings left.

"Molly has fallen into rambling ways with this visit of hers, of which she makes so much, as if nobody had ever been in a great house but

herself. She is going to Hamley Hall next week,—getting quite dissipated in fact."

Yet to Mrs. Goodenough, the next caller on the same errand of congratulation, Mrs. Gibson's tone was quite different. There had always been a tacit antagonism between the two, and the conversation now ran as follows :—

Mrs. Goodenough began,

"Well! Mrs. Gibson, I suppose I must wish you joy of Miss Cynthia's marriage; I should condole with some mothers as had lost their daughters; but you're not one of that sort, I reckon."

Now, as Mrs. Gibson was not quite sure to which "sort" of mothers the greatest credit was to be attached, she found it a little difficult how to frame her reply.

"Dear Cynthia!" she said. "One can't but rejoice in her happiness! And yet——" she ended her sentence by sighing.

"Ay. She was a young woman as would always have her followers; for, to tell the truth, she was as pretty a creature as ever I saw in my life. And all the more she needed skilful guidance. I am sure I, for one, am as glad as can be she's done so well by herself. Folks say Mr. Henderson has a handsome private fortune over and above what he makes by the law."

"There is no fear but that my Cynthia will have everything this world can give!" said Mrs. Gibson with dignity.

"Well, well! she was always a bit of a favourite of mine; and as I was saying to my granddaughter there" (for she was accompanied by a young lady, who looked keenly to the prospect of some wedding-cake), "I was never one of those who ran her down and called her a flirt and a jilt. I'm glad to hear she's like to be so well off. And now, I suppose, you'll be turning your mind to doing something for Miss Molly there?"

"If you mean by that, doing anything that can, by hastening her marriage, deprive me of the company of one who is like my own child, you are very much mistaken, Mrs. Goodenough. And pray remember, I am the last person in the world to match-make. Cynthia made Mr. Henderson's acquaintance at her uncle's in London."

"Ay! I thought her cousin was very often ill, and needing her nursing, and you were very keen she should be of use. I am not saying but what it is right in a mother; I'm only putting in a word for Miss Molly."

"Thank you, Mrs. Goodenough," said Molly, half-angry, half-laughing. "When I want to be married, I'll not trouble mamma. I'll look out for myself."

"Molly is becoming so popular, I hardly knew how we shall keep her at home," said Mrs. Gibson. "I miss her sadly; but, as I said to Mr. Gibson, let young people have change, and see a little of the world while they are young. It has been a great advantage to her being at the Towers while so many clever and distinguished people were there. I can already see a difference in her tone of conversation; and I should be

her choice of subjects. And now she is going to Hamley Hall. I can assure you I feel quite a proud mother, when I see how she is sought after. And my other daughter—my Cynthia—writing such letters from Paris!"

"Things is a deal changed since my days, for sure," said Mrs. Goodenough. "So, perhaps, I'm no judge. When I was married first, him and me went in a postchaise to his father's house, a matter of twenty mile off at the outside; and sate down to as good a supper amongst his friends and relations as you'd wish to see. And that was my first wedding jaunt. My second was when I better knowed my worth as a bride, and thought that now or never I must see London. But I were reckoned a very extravagant sort of a body to go so far, and spend my money, though Jerry had left me uncommon well off. But now young folks go off to Paris, and think nothing of the cost; and it's well if wilful waste don't make woeful want before they die. But I'm thankful somewhat is being done for Miss Molly's chances, as I said afore. It's not quite what I should have liked to have done for my Anna-Maria though. But times are changed, as I said just now."

CHAPTER LIX.

MOLLY GIBSON AT HAMLEY HALL.

THE conversation ended there for the time. Wedding-cake and wine were brought in, and it was Molly's duty to serve them out. But those last words of Mrs. Goodenough's tingled in her ears, and she tried to interpret them to her own satisfaction in any way but the obvious one. And that, too, was destined to be confirmed; for directly after Mrs. Goodenough took her leave, Mrs. Gibson desired Molly to carry away the tray to a table close to an open corner window, where the things might be placed in readiness for any future callers; and underneath this open window went the path from the house-door to the road. Molly heard Mrs. Goodenough saying to her granddaughter,—

"That Mrs. Gibson is a deep un. There's Mr. Roger Hamley as like as not to have the Hall estate, and she sends Molly a-visiting—" and then she passed out of hearing. Molly would have burst out crying, with a full sudden conviction of what Mrs. Goodenough had been alluding to: her sense of the impropriety of Molly's going to visit at the Hall when Roger was at home. To be sure Mrs. Goodenough was a commonplace, uneducated woman. Mrs. Gibson did not seem to have even noticed the allusion. Mr. Gibson took it all as a matter of course that Molly should go to the Hall as simply now, as she had done before. Roger had spoken of it in so straightforward a manner as showed he had no conception of its being an impropriety,—this visit,—this visit until now so long a subject of anticipation. Molly felt as if she could never speak to anyone

of the idea to which Mrs. Goodenough's words had given rise; as if she could never be the first to suggest the notion of impropriety, which presupposed what she blushed to think of. Then she tried to comfort herself by reasoning. If it had been wrong, forward, or indelicate, really improper, in the slightest degree, who would have been so ready as her father to put his veto upon it? But reasoning was of no use after Mrs. Goodenough's words had put fancies into Molly's head. The more she bade these fancies begone the more they answered her (as Daniel O'Rourke did the man in the moon, when he bade Dan get off his seat on the sickle, and go into empty space), "The more ye ask us the more we won't stir." One may smile at a young girl's miseries of this description; but they are very real and stinging miseries to her. All that Molly could do was to resolve on a single eye to the dear old squire, and his mental and bodily comforts; to try and heal up any breaches which might have occurred between him and Aimée; and to ignore Roger as much as possible. Good Roger! Kind Roger! Dear Roger! It would be very hard to avoid him as much as was consistent with common politeness; but it would be right to do it; and when she was with him she must be as natural as possible, or he might observe some difference; but what was natural? How much ought she avoid being with him? Would he even notice if she was more chary of her company, more calculating of her words? Alas! the simplicity of their intercourse was spoilt hence-forwards! She made laws for herself; she resolved to devote herself to the squire and to Aimée, and to forget Mrs. Goodenough's foolish speeches; but her perfect freedom was gone; and with it half her chance, that is to say, half her chance would have been lost over any strangers who had not known her before: they would probably have thought her stiff and awkward, and apt to say things and then retract them. But she was so different from her usual self that Roger noticed the change in her as soon as she arrived at the Hall. She had carefully measured out the days of her visit; they were to be exactly the same number as she had spent at the Towers. She feared lest if she stayed at the Hall a shorter time the squire might be annoyed. Yet how charming the place looked in its early autumnal glow as she drove up! And there was Roger at the hall-door waiting to receive her, watching for her coming. And now he retreated, apparently to summon his sister-in-law, who came now timidly forward in her deep widow's mourning, holding her boy in her arms as if to protect her shyness; but he struggled down, and ran towards the carriage, eager to greet his friend the coachman, and to obtain a promised ride. Roger did not say much himself: he wanted to make Aimée feel her place as daughter of the house; but she was too timid to speak much. And she only took Molly by the hand and led her into the drawing-room, where, as if by a sudden impulse of gratitude for all the tender nursing she had received during her illness, she put her arms round Molly and kissed her long and well. And after that they came to be friends.

It was nearly lunch-time, and the squire always made his appearance at that meal, more for the pleasure of seeing his grandson eat his dinner, than for any hunger of his own. To-day Molly quickly saw the whole state of the family affairs. She thought that even had Roger said nothing about them at the Towers, she should have found out that neither the father nor the daughter-in-law had as yet found the clue to each other's characters, although they had now been living for several months in the same house. Aimée seemed to forget her English in her nervousness; and to watch with the jealous eyes of a dissatisfied mother all the proceedings of the squire towards her little boy. They were not of the wisest kind it must be owned; the child sipped the strong ale with evident relish, and clamoured for everything which he saw the others enjoying. Aimée could hardly attend to Molly for her anxiety as to what her boy was doing and eating; yet she said nothing. Roger took the end of the table opposite to that at which sat grandfather and grandchild. After the boy's first wants were gratified the squire addressed himself to Molly.

"Well! and so you can come here a-visiting though you have been among the grand folks. I thought you were going to out us, Miss Molly, when I heard you was gone to the Towers—could not find any other place to stay at while father and mother were away, but an earl's, eh?"

"They asked me, and I went," said Molly; "now you've asked me, and I've come here."

"I think you might ha' known you'd be always welcome here, without waiting for asking. Why, Molly! I look upon you as a kind of a daughter more than Madam there!" dropping his voice a little, and perhaps supposing that the child's babble would drown the signification of his words.

"Nay, you need not look at me so pitifully—she does not follow English readily."

"I think she does!" said Molly, in a low voice, not looking up, however, for fear of catching another glimpse at Aimée's sudden forlornness of expression and deepened colour. She felt grateful, as if for a personal favour, when she heard Roger speaking to Aimée the moment afterwards in the tender terms of brotherly friendliness; and presently these two were sufficiently engaged in a tête-à-tête conversation to allow Molly and the squire to go on talking.

"He's a sturdy chap, is not he?" said the squire, stroking the little Roger's curly head. "And he can puff four puffs at grandpa's pipe without being sick, can't he?"

"I a'nat puff any more puffs," said the boy, resolutely. "Mamma says no. I a'nat."

"That's just like her!" said the squire, dropping his voice this time however. "As if it could do the child any harm!"

Molly made a point of turning the conversation from all personal subjects after this, and kept the squire talking about the progress of his drainage during the rest of lunch. He offered to take her to see his

she assented to the proposal, thinking, meantime, how little she need have anticipated the being thrown too intimately with Roger, who seemed to devote himself to his sister-in-law. But, in the evening, when Aimée had gone upstairs to put her boy to bed, and the squire was asleep in his easy chair, a sudden flush of memory brought Mrs. Goodenough's words again to her mind. She was virtually tête-à-tête with Roger, as she had been dozens of times before, but now she could not help assuming an air of constraint: her eyes did not meet his in the old frank way; she took up a book at a pause in the conversation, and left him puzzled and annoyed at the change in her manner. And so it went on during all the time of her visit. If sometimes she forgot and let herself go into all her old naturalness, by-and-by she checked herself, and became comparatively cold and reserved. Roger was pained at all this—more pained day after day; more anxious to discover the cause. Aimée, too, silently noticed how different Molly became in Roger's presence. One day she could not help saying to Molly,—

"Don't you like Roger? You would if you only knew how good he was! He is learned, but that is nothing: it is his goodness that one admires and loves."

"He is very good," said Molly. "I have known him long enough to know that."

"But you don't think him agreeable? He is not like my poor husband, to be sure; and you knew him well, too. Ah! tell me about him once again. When you first knew him? When his mother was alive?"

Molly had grown very fond of Aimée: when the latter was at her ease she had very charming and attaching ways; but feeling uneasy in her position in the squire's house, she was almost repellent to him; and he, too, put on his worst side to her. Roger was most anxious to bring them together, and had several consultations with Molly as to the best means of accomplishing this end. As long as they talked upon this subject she spoke to him in the quiet sensible manner which she inherited from her father; but when their discussions on this point were ended, she fell back into her piquant assumption of dignified reserve. It was very difficult to her to maintain this strange manner, especially when once or twice she fancied that it gave him pain; and she would go into her own room and suddenly burst into tears on these occasions, and wish that her visit was ended, and that she was once again in the eventless tranquillity of her own home. Yet presently her fancy changed, and she clung to the swiftly passing hours, as if she would still retain the happiness of each. For, unknown to her, Roger was exerting himself to make her visits pleasant. He was not willing to appear as the instigator of all the little plans for each day, for he felt as if somehow he did not hold the same place in her regard as formerly. Still, one day Aimée suggested a visiting-expedition—another day they gave little Roger the unheard-of pleasure of two visits—there was something else agreeable for a while; and so on.

Roger who arranged all these simple pleasures—such as he knew Molly would enjoy. But to her he only appeared as the ready forwarder of Aimée's devices. The week was nearly gone, when one morning the squire found Roger sitting in the old library—with a book before him, it is true, but so deep in thought that he was evidently startled by his father's unexpected entrance.

"I thought I should find thee here, my lad! We'll have the old room done up again before winter; it smells musty enough, and yet I see it's the place for thee! I want thee to go with me round the five-acres. I'm thinking of laying it down in grass. It's time for you to be getting into the fresh air, you look quite woebegone over books, books, books; there never was a thing like 'em for stealing a man's health out of him!"

So Roger went out with his father, without saying many words till they were at some distance from the house. Then he brought out a sentence with such abruptness that he repaid his father for the start the latter had given him a quarter of an hour before.

"Father, you remember I'm going out again to the Cape next month! You spoke of doing up the library. If it is for me, I shall be away all the winter."

"Can't you get off it?" pleaded his father. "I thought maybe you'd forgotten all about it."

"Not likely!" said Roger, half-smiling.

"Well, but they might have found another man to finish up your work."

"No one can finish it but myself. Besides, an engagement is an engagement. When I wrote to Lord Hollingford to tell him I must come home, I promised to go out again for another six months."

"Ay. I know. And perhaps it will put it out of my mind. It will always be hard on me to part from thee. But I daresay it's best for you."

Roger's colour deepened. "You are alluding to—to Miss Kirkpatrick—Mrs. Henderson I mean. Father, let me tell you once for all I think that was rather a hasty affair. I am pretty sure now that we were not suited to each other. I was wretched when I got her letter—at the Cape I mean—but I believe it was for the best."

"That's right. That's my own boy," said the squire, turning round and shaking hands with his son with vehemence. "And now I'll tell you what I heard the other day, when I was at the magistrates' meeting. They were all saying she had jilted Preston."

"I don't want to hear anything against her: she may have her faults, but I can never forget how I once loved her."

"Well, well! Perhaps it's right. I was not so bad about it, was I, Roger? Poor Osborne need not have been so secret with me. I asked your Miss Cynthia out here—and her mother and all—my heart is stronger than my bite. For if I had a wish on earth it was to see Osborne married as befitting one of an old stock, and he went and chose out this French girl, of no family at all, only a—"

"Never mind what she was; look at what she is! I wonder you are not more taken with her humility and sweetness, father!"

"I don't even call her pretty," said the squire, uneasily, for he dreaded a repetition of the arguments which Roger had often used to make him give Aimée her proper due of affection and position. "Now your Miss Cynthia was pretty, I will say that for her, the baggage! and to think that when you two lads flew right in your father's face, and picked out girls below you in rank and family, you should neither of you have set your fancies on my little Molly there. I daresay I should ha' been angry enough at the time, but the lassie would ha' found her way to my heart, as never this French lady, nor t' other one, could ha' done."

Roger did not answer.

"I don't see why you might not put up for her still. I'm humble enough now, and you're not heir as Osborne was who married a servant-maid. Don't you think you could turn your thoughts upon Molly Gibson, Roger."

"No!" said Roger, shortly. "It's too late—too late. Don't let us talk any more of my marrying. Is not this the five-acre field?" And soon he was discussing the relative values of meadow, arable and pasture land with his father, as heartily as if he had never known Molly, or loved Cynthia. But the squire was not in such good spirits, and went but heavily into the discussion. At the end of it he said *à propos de botte*,

"But don't you think you could like her if you tried, Roger?"

Roger knew perfectly well to what his father was alluding, but for an instant he was on the point of pretending to misunderstand. At length, however, he said, in a low voice,

"I shall never try, father. Don't let us talk any more about it. As I said before, it is too late."

The squire was like a child to whom some toy has been refused; from time to time the thought of his disappointment in this matter occurred to his mind; and then he took to blaming Cynthia as the primary cause of Roger's present indifference to womankind.

It so happened that on Molly's last morning at the Hall, she received her first letter from Cynthia—Mrs. Henderson. It was just before breakfast-time: Roger was out of doors, Aimée had not as yet come down; Molly was alone in the dining-room, where the table was already laid. She had just finished reading her letter when the squire came in, and she immediately and joyfully told him what the morning had brought to her. But when she saw the squire's face she could have bitten her tongue out for having named Cynthia's name to him. He looked vexed and depressed.

"I wish I might never hear of her again. I do. She's been the bane of my Roger, that's what she has. I have not slept half the night, and it's all her fault. Why, there's my boy saying now that he has no heart for ever marrying, poor lad! I wish it had been you, Molly, my dear had taken a fancy for. I told Roger so father day, and I said that all you

were beneath what I ever thought to see them marry,—well—it's of no use—it's too late, now, as he said. Only never let me hear that baggage's name again, that's all. And no offence to you, either, lassie. I know you love the wench; but if you'll take an old man's word, you're worth a score of her. I wish young men would think so too," he muttered as he went to the side-table to carve the ham, while Molly poured out the tea—her heart very hot all the time, and effectually silenced for a space. It was with the greatest difficulty that she could keep tears of mortification from falling. She felt altogether in a wrong position in that house, which had been like a home to her until this last visit. What with Mrs. Goodenough's remarks, and now this speech of the squire's, implying—at least to her susceptible imagination—that his father had proposed her as a wife to Roger, and that she had been rejected, she was more glad than she could express, or even think, that she was going home this very morning. Roger came in from his walk while she was in this state of feeling. He saw in an instant that something had distressed Molly; and he longed to have the old friendly right of asking her what it was. But she had effectually kept him at too great a distance during the last few days for him to feel at liberty to speak to her in the old straightforward brotherly way; especially now, when he perceived her efforts to conceal her feelings, and the way in which she drank her tea in feverish haste, and accepted bread only to crumble it about her plate, untouched. It was all that he could do to make talk under these circumstances; but he backed up her efforts as well as he could until Aimée came down, grave and anxious; her boy had not had a good night, and did not seem well; he had fallen into a feverish sleep now, or she could not have left him. Immediately the whole table was in a ferment. The squire pushed away his plate, and could eat no more; Roger was trying to extract a detail or a fact out of Aimée, who began to give way to tears. Molly quickly proposed that the carriage, which had been ordered to take her home at eleven, should come round immediately—she had everything ready packed up, she said,—and bring back her father at once. By leaving directly, she said it was probable they might catch him after he had returned from his morning visits in the town; and before he had set off on his more distant round. Her proposal was agreed to, and she went upstairs to put on her things. She came down all ready into the drawing-room, expecting to find Aimée and the squire there; but during her absence word had been brought to the anxious mother and grandfather, that the child had wakened up in a panic, and both had rushed up to their darling. But Roger was in the drawing-room awaiting Molly, with a large bunch of the choicest flowers.

"Look, Molly!" said he, as she was on the point of leaving the room again, on finding him there alone. "I gathered these flowers for you, before breakfast." He came to meet her reluctant advances.

"Thank you!" said she. "You are very kind. I am very much obliged to you."

"Then you must do something for me," said he, determined not to notice the restraint of her manner, and making the re-arrangement of the flowers which she held a sort of link between them, so that she could not follow her impulse, and leave the room.

"Tell me,—honestly as I know you will if you speak at all,—have not I done something to vex you since we were so happy at the Towers together?"

His voice was so kind and true,—his manner so winning yet wistful, that Molly would have been thankful to tell him all; she believed that he could have helped her more than any one to understand how she ought to behave rightly; he would have disentangled her fancies,—if only he himself had not lain at the very core and centre of all her perplexity and dismay. How could she tell him of Mrs. Goodenough's words troubling her maiden modesty? How could she ever repeat what his father had said that morning, and assure him that she, no more than he, wished that their old friendliness should be troubled by the thought of a nearer relationship?

"No, you never vexed me in my whole life, Roger," said she, looking straight at him for the first time for many days.

"I believe you, because you say so. I have no right to ask further, Molly. Will you give me back one of those flowers, as a pledge of what you have said?"

"Take whichever you like," said she, eagerly offering him the whole nosegay to choose from.

"No; you must choose, and you must give it me."

Just then the squire came in. Roger would have been glad if Molly had not gone on so eagerly to ransack the bunch for the whitest flower in his father's presence; but she exclaimed:

"Oh, please, Mr. Hamley, do you know which is Roger's favourite flower?"

"No. A rose, I daresay. The carriage is at the door, and, Molly my dear, I don't want to hurry you, but——"

"I know. Here, Roger,—here is a rose!"

("And red as a rose was she.")

I will find papa as soon as ever I get home. How is the little boy?"

"I'm afraid he's beginning of some kind of a fever."

And the squire took her to the carriage, talking all the way of the little boy; Roger following, and hardly heeding what he was doing in the answer to the question he kept asking himself: "Too late—or not? Can she ever forget that my first foolish love was given to one so different?"

* While she, as the carriage rolled away, kept saying to herself,—
"We are friends again, I don't believe he will remember what the dear squire took it into his head to suggest for many days. It is so pleasant to be on the old terms again; and what lovely flowers!"

Ronda Fair.

ANDALUCIA differs from the rest of Spain as widely as though it were a separate country, and in the name of Ronda is summed up everything that is most Andalusian. The arid wastes of Castile are contrasted by the rich valleys and the rugged mountains of the southern kingdom; and the sombre, perhaps the stupid, dignity of the Castilians themselves is contrasted not less sharply with the rollicking carelessness of the men of Granada or Cadiz; but it is at Ronda that richness and severity mingle together in most perfect harmony, and it is there that the swagger and the broad humour of the majos most offend the fastidious taste of the Castilian. Nestling far up among the sierras, it is barred by their successive lines from the sea and from the valleys of the Jenal and the Guadalquivir; tracks that can only by utmost courtesy be called paths, lead over their ridges through country that till lately was of repute evil even for Spain, and except at the time of the great fair in May, little converse is held with the outer world. Then, however, from all the provinces, come droves of horses and mules; and for a week the plain outside the town is covered by tents, the streets are filled with an unaccustomed throng, and the gorgeous costumes of the local farmers, and the gay sashes and embroidery of the mountaineers, mingle with the more sober dresses of picadors and aficionados from every part of Spain.

For Ronda, therefore, it was that half-a-dozen subalterns and a stray traveller started from Gibraltar just before the fair-time of 1865. There is not much excitement now in a Spanish ride; and the cork wood through which, after the first half-dozen miles, the road lay for a long distance, gives in its glades and thick underwood, and overarched recesses of huge trees, an infinite number of spots where overworked officers may pass the hot hours of day in smoke and sleep till the approach of evening recalls them to the duties of mess and of yet more sleep. But till Espartero instituted the *Guardia Civil*, and the energy of O'Donnell used the instrument which his predecessor had fashioned, the cork wood was the central stronghold of the contrabandistas who managed the trade between Gibraltar and Spain. There of old they flourished undisturbed, protecting the people, the officials, and themselves, useful and respected members of a community which has always understood how to brighten the routine of money-getting by the piquant accessories of blood and murder. When at last they were meddled with, the friendship of certain officers and the sympathy of the military allowed them to remain so really almost unmolested; and while a stray party would hardly have been sent, no man would have been rash enough to intrude there without

their domain. With the growth of strong government, however, they dwindled rapidly ; and O'Donnell has earned the thanks of foreigners, and the not always unspoken hatred of the natives, by the firmness with which he acted against the smugglers. Contraband trade has even been brought within narrow limits ; and if its agents are morally on a higher level than before, their life is hard, and their operations have become petty. Dogs who have been well treated for the purpose in Spain are taken within the English lines ; they are beaten and starved, and then, with a bundle of goods tied on their backs, are let loose at sundown far outside the gates. In such miserable smuggling as this, no contrabandista with proper sense of dignity could engage ; and the only traces of the old state of things which are to be found is the cork wood and the stories which attach to most of its inhabitants. One of these men with a history, a certain Manuel, was added to our party. He was an ancient picador and actual earth-stopper to the Gibraltar hunt. At the time when his walks were more by night than day, he had met, in the way of business, with a soldier, who, as he emphatically expressed it, *se moró*, happened to die, and Manuel had been thenceforth even more respected than before. He was a dark-devil, jovial fellow, full of broad humour, scamp enough to ask three times as much as was reasonable for his guidance to Ronda, and good fellow enough to take a fair payment with a laugh, and be all the better friends with us for our objection to be cheated. To be sure, it would have been no great strain to his temper had we asked him to go for nothing, for to an ex-picador the name of bull-fight is as exciting as the red flag to the bull himself ; and Manuel's promptness of equipment was witness to his anxiety. In five minutes his wife had made up his bundle, he had saddled his horse, and was leading the way at a gallop, with wild gesticulations and contrabandial song. At first we went still through the cork wood, then, after a while, the country opened out into a valley, watered by one of the branches of the Guadiaro, its floor sprinkled with oxen, knee-deep in thick pasture, and its sides chequered with yellowing fields of corn, and sombre groves of ilex and of cork. Here and there a closely-huddled village, high up on a steep hill-top, spoke of the days when Moors and Spaniards fought for every inch along the hardly-contested border, and scarcely less of Carlist and Christino wars, when every defensible house was the scene of irregular skirmishing. In front, the crests of the sierras began to heave their abrupt and stony shapes. More or less, these elements made up the scenery of the whole ride. Sometimes we cantered through the pastures, now floundering into hidden bogs, now striking the remnants of a paved Moorish road ; at others, we scrambled over boulders, half hidden in fan-palms and heather, where gleams of sun, through the sparkling evergreens, lit masses of gorgeous flowers, and distant sierras showed hazy with heat through the haze in the leaves. At other times, again, we picked our way through muddy watercourses, or yet again, burst over carpets of green and white flowers of alfa. Here and there, from the tops of hills, we would have

vistas, through the many ranges of far-off plains, of the Mediterranean, or of the Apes' Hill, still further away, in Africa. Never for a mile was the scene unchanged, neyer was it otherwise than beautiful; and in its beauty an indefinable air of wildness, not of that tempered kind which affects the outskirts of population, but that frank, utter wildness which is associated with the absence of mankind. Although there were sometimes traces of cultivation, and, at distant intervals, a house or a town might be seen perched afar off, it seemed as if man was only an accidental passer-by, and had no abiding in the place. This was more true, naturally, of some parts of the country than of others. Our second day's ride led all through the heart of the sierras, through a settled and a cultivated land. There was a path, often fully five feet wide; vineyards circled not infrequent farmhouses; and the upper waters of the Guadiaro, brawling over stony shallows, or resting in quiet pools under dipping willows and alders, mocked the eye with a promise of trout which in Southern Spain is always false. The scenery, in fact, was much like that of the lower end of a Highland valley, with southern sky and southern details of vegetation.

Our first day's journey was long, and night had already fallen, when we led our horses through the *salle à manger* of the *Venta al Cortes* into the stable behind. Every one knows the nature of a Spanish country inn; its division into two chambers—the one for the horses, the other for the men; its foodlessness, its skin-flavoured wine, its diet, the ignorance of its keeper that his calling involves service, are all written endlessly in the chronicles of Ford, and of every traveller who has imagined for himself the merit of unusual roughing, and has sketched in proportionately deep colours the privations which he has undergone. It seems to me, however, that some injustice has been done to Spanish inns; and if a man does not object to groom his own horse, if he can live on eggs, good bread, and *Amontillado*, sleep on a clean floor with his saddle-bags for pillows, and is able to do himself what he wants to be done, he need never be wretched in Andalusia at least. For my own part, this hardly seems to me to reach further than that point of roughness which lends an additional fillip to enjoyment; and we after our twelve hours' ride undoubtedly felt its pleasure, or else were inspired by the contents of a vast two-gallon jar of wine, which, passing from mouth to mouth, barely satisfied our wants during dinner; for as the evening drew in, nigger melodies and lugubrious songs swelled in louder and louder choruses through the still air of Cortes. We were seated in a little recess or fire-place, which, with the broad passage leading through from the street to the stable, composed the ground-floor of the *venta*: gradually the wider space filled with a dense living mass; with boys marking time in vehement sympathy with our song; with broad-faced girls, like the *Dalcinea* of Gustave Doré, shrilly laughing with prolonged crescendo of sound as every chorus ended in a louder shout; with older men and women who were somewhat surprised at such behaviour on the part of great English señores from Gibraltar, but

who were far too well bred to listen otherwise than with polite attention, and who in the bottom of their hearts would have been only too glad to join with us in one great revel of voice and wine. Presently a cornet-à-piston wandered somehow into the crowd; it was seized at once; one of our party played, then a Spaniard took a turn, then came an alternation of English and of Spanish songs, and it was past twelve before we cleared out our self-invited guests, and went upstairs to make the difficult allotment among six men of two mattresses, two trestles, and one brick floor.

It was still early in the next day when Ronda came suddenly within view as we turned an elbow of one of the hills which encompass the basin in which it lies. The first sight was not very remarkable; a ford through which a long train of horses for the fair were splashing at the moment—a grim black cross, one of those registers of murder so common by the waysides in Spain—a long arid tract, stony and treeless, which led with even slope to a line of red-tiled houses some two miles away—an equally arid series of reddish-grey hills behind—formed a picture typical, perhaps, but hardly such as might be expected from the famous beauty of Ronda. But while we mounted the stony waste we were suddenly checked. Beneath our horses' feet dropped sheer a range of lofty cliffs which curved round in a vast amphitheatre, and following with their crests the upward slope of the hill on which we were, presented under the town an absolutely perpendicular face of more than six hundred feet. At their base lay dense woods of chestnut and oak, which stretched over an undulating fall towards the mouth of the valley up which we had come, and clothed the hill side which formed the southern half of the amphitheatre. Through the trees could be rather heard than seen the tumbling waters of the Guadiaro issuing apparently from the very cliffs themselves, and looking backwards and around we saw grand forms of larger mountains rising above the tame hills which had hitherto limited our view. As we mounted still further, we could see that Ronda stood upon a plateau some eight miles in diameter, barren in parts, but over the larger portion glowing with rich verdure. Encircled by hills it could scarcely be said in strictness to be, for the neighbouring sierras may all be roughly said to trend north-west and south-east, and the level space is formed by the sinking of two of the minor ranges; but it is entirely surrounded at least by mountains which are the more picturesque that some obtrude straight flanks, and some ribbed corners, on the plain. The higher summits of these mountains, set forth in huge teeth of fantastic shapes, but governing the individual configurations in a tendency to upheave in great curves towards the south, which, in the half dark of sundown, gives them an air of life, as of monsters, like that in Turner's Garden of the Hesperides, painfully dragging their stunted bodies along. As has been already said, a second stage of plateau, and this, at the point where the Guadiaro issues to plunge down the rocks, commences with a more gently-sided valley above the town, by a winding gorge called the Tajo, narrow enough to be spanned by a single

arch. Whether the scenery of the Tajo—beginning in the mellowed grandeur of the cliff-edged woods, passing the mills built in stages one over the other in the bed of the falling river, passing the bridge, partly Moorish partly Spanish in its workmanship, to where the gorge some thirty yards across is walled by upright rocks four hundred feet in height—or whether the wide expanse of plain and valley and sierra seen from the Alameda, be the more glorious, it would be hard to say; but, each in its kind, they are undoubtedly of beauty rare at once in nature and degree.

The side on which we entered Ronda was that of the horse-fair; as soon as we had installed ourselves, therefore, we retraced our steps to the bare brow where some eight hundred or a thousand horses and mules were hobbled or picketed. In the chief fair of the province, it would naturally be expected that large numbers of young horses of good native breed would have been brought for sale. To our astonishment, we found scarcely any; with the exception of perhaps half-a-dozen, they were old Roman-nosed, long-toed and cow-hocked screws, bearing traces of their origin, no doubt, but withal as ugly and useless-looking a lot of animals as could well be conceived. They obviously, for the most part, did not belong to private men, but had been cooped up by jockeys for sale, and their temporary owners were continually riding them about on the curb in that showy style which takes a Spanish fancy so much. The few good horses that there were, were exclusively Andalusian, and they, almost equally with the rest, had the great fault of oyster hoofs and weak hind-quarters. The collection at Ronda was disappointing, and Andalusian horses generally are unpromising enough; it would, however, be a great mistake utterly to despise them. On their invariable diet of chopped straw, they contrive to get through an immense amount of work, and they are sure-footed to a degree absolutely marvellous in the rough ground, through which their ordinary travelling lies, and over which the risk of taking an English horse would be extreme. For an entire day they will go, with a long high amble, slow to outward appearance, but in some way covering the ground at a rate which can only be appreciated when one attempts to overtake them. This amble, if easy for the horse, is scarcely less pleasant for the rider, who, when once he has got to understand it, can sit without fatigue or motion for as long as his horse will carry him. In most places, moreover, it is the only pace, with the exception of a walk, which the nature of the ground will allow. But with this special accomplishment, with his endurance and sure-footedness, is closed the list of merits as a goer which the Andalusian horse possesses; he will gallop readily enough when he is fed up with unaccustomed corn, but seldom can he be forced into a gallop, and of a trot he is absolutely incapable. Curiously enough, while possessing themselves so inferior a type of animal, the Andalusians never import barbs, because, as is said, the latter are unsuited to the country. It is difficult to understand that this reason can be well founded, for a large part at least of Morocco is as hilly and rugged as the most roadless districts of Andalusia; yet it is equally difficult to

suppose that any other reason could prevent the introduction of so decidedly superior a breed.

However ugly the horses at Ronda were individually, they could at least help to make up an effective picture, and there was no want over the wide field in which they were of scenes such as those with which Phillip has made every one familiar. Horses in long lines broken by their struggles to move stood hobbled, mixed with great mules more handsome by far than their legitimate brothers, their gay worsted tassels and the boughs set to protect them from the flies waving in bright colours about them, while the jangling of their bells, and their neighs, and the braying of an occasional donkey, almost drowned the continued scream into which were merged the infinity of bargaining, joking, quarrelling, declaiming voices of men. Now and then a greater tumult in some corner of the fair, and a hasty scattering of people, would announce that some horses had burst loose and carried battle and alarm into the neighbouring crowds of animals and men. Sometimes a fight thus begun would spread over an area of several hundred yards, and would last for half-an-hour before the plunging, kicking, biting mass of frightened beasts could be calmed and disentangled. Meantime in other parts the common business went on: burly farmers, clad from head to foot in black velvet, would be chaffering with not more knowing jockeys; and jaunty majos, with scarlet fajas, embroidered coats, tight breeches fitting without crease to their slender thighs, gaiters trailing a brick-red fringe along the ground, and with a long white wand in their hand, would be picking their way daintily among the ragged gipsies, and the devil-may-care tribe of drovers and hangers-on. Here and there water-carriers elbowed their way, balancing on their shoulders large earthen jars, with reeds through the cork from which the water is sucked; and Gitanías, usually old and ugly, crouched at the doors of tents, with fires on the ground on which slices of gourd sputtered and fried incessantly. Through all the streets of the town the same crowd, the same noise; but there, instead of horses, every commodity that Andalusian necessities or extravagance can require. Each house had its lower windows taken out, so that the ground-floor rooms were converted into open stalls, and in double line down the great thoroughfare stood booths and sheds besides.

Among the more aristocratic traders, the shopmen of Madrid took the lead, with corner houses of many openings, all filled with silver plate; but cottens from England and Mulhouse almost contested precedence by the vastness of the space which they occupied. Herr Betrüger had brought a large stock of foreign toys from Nürnberg; crinolines were appropriately imported from Paris; and a scorpion, as livers in the booths are called, had hazarded the strange venture of bitter beer, which, with liqueurs, he dispensed to not unappreciating mouths. But the mass of the booths of course displayed the fruits of native industry alone. Brilliant-coloured fajas, worked in silk, hung out in festoons or streamers; embossed and tinelled saddlery, the coarse striped capotes which

serves for cloak or counterpane, skins tanned of that peculiar red which Andalusians affect so much, first struck the eye by the force of their colours; but more curious were the different kinds of cutlery; small inoffensive knives, not made to close, but kept in leather cases, with blades three inches long, and an inch and a half broad; knives of very opposite intent, with long thin points, but bulging above, so as to enlarge the wound under the fifth rib, which it is the office of the point to make; finally, knives for full dress, not working in satchels like the last, but boasting of a spring, and rich with green foil and inlaid glass; and more curious still, the bizarre mixture of crucifixes, castanets, religious pictures, and fises, which covered the boards of many a stall.

Such were the objects and sounds that filled the eyes and ears in Ronda Fair, with their brightness, their bustle, their fulness, and their clamour. But in three successive afternoons there was a time when all the noise and business was hushed throughout the town, and its whole life was concentrated in the bull ring. There, for several hours before the fight, patient and good-tempered, stood a long queue outside the gates, till, much earlier than the time fixed for the performance, all the six thousand seats within were occupied, save a few on which the slanting sun poured too fully to allow of sight. *Once inside, the eagerness of the mass sank into apparent indifference. A well-bred dislike to do anything exceptional, or to put self forward in any way, restrained every one from those ebullitions which would have enlivened the waiting of an English crowd; it sat generally silent, sometimes sleepily, sometimes drumming with the everlasting white wand. Some, more original or more vain, conceived and executed the bold idea of walking across the ring, but these were all either exceptionally well-dressed, and so could swagger with an air, or were too ragged and mean to be diffident, and so could swagger from mere effrontery. Water-carriers bore about their huge jars, gamins ran and played practical jokes on each other, like idle boys elsewhere, and the butchers, who have to kill the wounded horses and cut up the bulls, slunk mysteriously by, for no obvious reason, along the alley beneath the seats. Then the greater aficionados, who had been inspecting the bulls, came pompously to their seats; the bull contractor, attended by a knot of friends, stepped, amid shouts of greeting, to his box over the entrance for his animals; and at last, preceded by a flourish of trumpets, the procession of the fighters issued from an opposite door, with the picadors in front, the chullos behind, and finally, Cuchares, greatest matador of Spain, and Domínguez, his scarcely inferior companion. They advanced to the middle of the arena; the picadors turned right and left to the station most opposed to the bulls' first rush. Cuchares, in front of the contractor's box, took the accustomed oath to kill or to be himself killed, and then the key was handed down, and the folding-gates were opened for the entry of the first bull. From out the darkness he lounged forward to the door, stayed for a moment as if dazzled by the glare and wondering at the throng; then caught sight of

a horse, and, as if by one movement, rushed over the breadth of the ring, hurled the picador from his saddle, and the horse to the ground. He was a black undersized bull of astonishing speed and strength; but, like all the rest, with an awkward action, as though the body and legs were borne helplessly along by the enormous throat, which, working in every muscle, seemed to sway itself over the earth by its own mere weight. Like the rest, too, after the first charge, he seemed worried and puzzled rather than angry, willing to leave men and horses alone if he might, but willing also, if he might not, to resent very grimly indeed each successive interference. Distracted by the flags and cloaks which waved in his eyes from every side, he left the horse after goring him repeatedly, and retired to the middle of the ring. Then for a moment he stood with his nose held low, pawing and glaring. Another picador moved towards him, and again, with clumsily headlong force, he rolled over man and animal in an undistinguishable mass, goring, and with each gore lowing from the depths of his chest. Seven or eight times he repeated his charges. Sometimes he was successful as before; sometimes he was foiled by the skill of the picador, and turned from the unhurt horse with the additional irritation of a lance-prick. At length, when five horses had been disabled, the bandilleros were called for; and the more graceful part of the fight was going to begin, when his career was abruptly stopped by an accident of the most ludicrous kind. One of the horses which he had killed lay in the centre of the arena, and whencesoever or whithersoever the bull went the body was invariably in the way. Evidently the bull resented this as a deliberate provocation, and whenever a moment's pause took place he filled up the time by a new rush at his insulting foe. When the picadors were withdrawn, and the ehullos had not yet neared him, he obviously considered the opportunity favourable for another expression of disgust, and, gathering all his force, charged once again so viciously that both his horns stuck fast. For fully half a minute he remained balanced, his head half buried in the horse's body, his legs kicking feebly in the air; then with a resounding crash he fell on the opposite side, dragging over his enemy with him, and for some time lay motionless. When at last he recovered consciousness and rose, it was with dazed look and shaking feet, and a bull, more than any other of the year worthy of a noble end, had to be put out of the way in a manner, to a genuine aficionado, distressingly quick and inertistic. Another bull was the involuntary hero of a more startling incident. He was a poor mean-spirited wretch, who fled before the picadors, went meandering to the door by which he had come in, and could not be goaded by the sting of the bandilleros to rush or even to face attack. At the frequent cry of "¡fúoco! ¡fúoco!" from the impatient people, darts girdled with hand-rockets were planted in his back, and his cowering fear was changed into furious terror. Maddened by the burning of his flesh, by the long darts which fixed in his skin by turbs, bent about his ears as he moved, by the shower of sparks, and by the explosions of the rockets, he galloped round and round the arena,

pawing at the barrier, leaping by turns, and sometimes in his desperation almost scrambling over. Suddenly he stood still opposite that part which the glare of the sun had fortunately left almost empty of spectators, and with one mighty effort cleared the barrier, passed the alley beyond, and lighted in the second row of seats. The leap was about ten feet in height, and could not have been less than sixteen or eighteen in horizontal distance. A body of soldiers stationed close by with fixed bayonets, flung down their muskets and plunged into the alley; the people on either side rose in panic; some took refuge in the ring, some spread confusion to the further seats, and, in fact, had the bull understood the impossibility of escape and the sweetness of revenge, the results might have been frightful. But his sole idea was to get away—to his excited imagination, one man seemed as likely as another to be the owner of a banderilla, and he merely clambered further and further up, in the hope of finding an outlet. By the time, however, that he was at the topmost bank of seats, the whole body of fighters were upon him, and when he turned aside from the wall towards the still near chaos of struggling people, Cuchares had already clutched him by the tail, and he was pushed, hustled, and pricked down to the alley, where his undignified life was closed by the hands of the common butcher.

For the rest, the bull-fights of Ronda were such as can be seen every day at some place or other in Spain, and as have been again and again described. In the short career of each bull there were the same incidents to disgust and to excite. The sport, so far as the horses are concerned, is simply and absolutely revolting. If the horses which are employed were in the prime of their life and carefully trained, as was formerly the case, the risk to which they would be exposed might possibly be so diminished as not to be more than man ordinarily conceives himself to have a right by usage to require that they bear. But as it is, miserable starved brutes, fit only for the knacker's yard, are sent into the ring bearing a man swaddled in cork and banded with iron, so heavy that they can barely stagger under his weight; they are ridden with their eyes bandaged in order that they may not by unmanageableness increase the danger and the wages of the picador, and their only use is to feast the populace, not satisfied by the death of the bull, with a sufficiency of blood. They effect little towards fatiguing the bull; they add nothing to the beauty of the sport. In Mexico, they are never employed. Their only use is to afford the opportunity of seeing an animal which has been striving in a half intelligent way to carry out the wishes of man, tread on its own entrails, or lie craving piteously for help during half-an-hour at a time while the applauded bull returns again and again to gore him. It is very different, however, with the bull. After all, man is the god of the animal creation, and, rightly or wrongly, it makes a vast difference in our sympathies whether a beast acts in accordance with or in opposition to his will. The bull is an ill-conditioned brute, rejoicing in strife and fated to be killed sooner or later; he gets probably a more

satisfactory death in the ring than in the slaughter-house, and he gives occasion for a display on the part of man of courage, of cultivated agility, of the keenest eye, and of the finest skill. Nothing can be more skilful than the manner in which he is played with by the *chullos* : their leaps over his horns ; their passages within a foot of his head, while he rushes at full speed ; the quickness with which they guide him away from a fallen comrade, or with which they plant the darts in his back and before his face ; above all, the delicacy and the daring with which their more perfect artists trail the *capa*, before him at a walk, and direct his fury to an inch. Nor can the bull be said to be without his chances, when his slaughterer stands almost motionless within eighteen inches of his horns, with nothing but his own quick eye to save him from the fatal stroke of his antagonist. With one swift motion of the hand, the animal is killed in an instant, and almost bloodlessly. A very serious drawback of bull-fighting as a sport is that it must be exercised by professionals alone, and that no man, however strong in nerve and active in limb, however accustomed to wild sports of other kinds, can engage in it without a long apprenticeship in the bloodless romps rather than fights with young bulls, in which the *chullos* and *matadors* learn the character of the animal, and the method of guiding and distracting him.

With the bull-fights the Fair of Ronda closed ; a few days saw the heterogeneous elements which had come together for the moment restored to their appropriate places. In like manner the rest departed, and two other days' ride over the crests of the hills under which we had ridden before, brought us back to the mess-room of Gibraltar, through scenery even more superb than that of the outward road.

Recollections of the Life of Joseph Haywood, and some of his Thoughts about Music.

WHENEVER in the heat of musical argument I have allowed myself to give way to those common expressions of discontented old age, "Now-a-days" and "In my time," a visitation of doubting and profound humility succeeds, in which I am tempted to set down half my opinions to the intolerance of my advancing years, so naturally averse to change—alas ! even averse to improvement that includes change.

After all, what does that contemptuous "Now-a-days" mean ? or that "In my time," pronounced with such regretful pride ? For the most part, only that the clouds are emptied of their light, that the little rose-coloured islands have become mere violet blots upon a grey sky, that the sun has gone down ; and I endeavour to become resigned to the idea that possibly it is only my own sere and yellow leaf that is at fault, and which makes it a matter of impossibility with me to digest food that the rest of the world finds both palatable and sufficient for nourishment. I then endeavour to console myself with the heroic but uncheerful consideration that it is doubtless better that I should be a fastidious and cantankerous old man than that the musical taste of my country should be going to the dogs altogether ; and that, provided the sacred fire still burns in many breasts, it matters comparatively but little that upon one small altar a heap of cold white ashes should be lying.

A short stay in London, from which I had come away in a state of grievous discouragement with regard to the cultivation of musical taste in England, had thrown me by turns into these different phases of melancholy, until a day or two ago, when I went up to the Court to dine with my friend Lord Winterton. In the evening, his niece, Miss Jane Trevor, played to perfection some of old Sebastian Bach's enchanting dance-musico—full of smiles and good faith, of gentle humour and tender fancy. I could have cried for joy, first over the exquisite grace and charm of the things, and then again for joy at finding that I was not the corpse I fancied I had become—that real beauty had the power to stir my depths as much as ever it had done in the ardent years of youthful enthusiasm, and that it was, as I *know* it was, the utter want of the divine imaginative quality which belongs to all the really great masters, that had made me rebel against that vulgar noise which seems so entirely to have taken the place of better things in the fashionable world of music.

Of the gradual decadence in vocal art within the last thirty years, I

had tangible proof the same evening; for in looking through Lady Jane Trevor's collection of Bellini's music, I found it full of passages which the tenor singers now in vogue would find it next to impossible to master; and going further back still, and taking up Rossini's opera of *Ricciardo e Zoraide*, I discovered that it contained no less than three great tenor parts, the least important of which would be beyond the strength of most of the tenors of the present day, whose powers of vocalization are so limited, that the orchestral accompaniment is generally made to play in unison with the voice every passage at all difficult of execution, so that the noise of the instruments effectually drowns any possible defect on the part of the singer.

These revolutions take place almost imperceptibly to those who remain stationary, and around whom they are working gradually day by day: as for me, I had ample power of comparing the present and the past, for I had been away for a lapse of years, and had heard no music in the interval; there had been nothing to soften the lines of change, nothing with which to bridge over the gulf between what was and is, and I can hardly describe the shock it was to my feelings on my return to Europe to find the true gods overthrown, and horrible idols—creatures of wood and stone—set up in their places. I had left England some five-and-twenty years ago, as tutor to a family who were going abroad. I was then about twenty-five years old myself, and a passionate lover of music. My father, who was a very poor country curate, with a large number of children, had also a violin; and I think this instrument, upon which he played very beautifully, was almost as dear to him as any of his children. Certainly, he owed it some gratitude, for it was the one prettiness of a life painted too much in greys; the only solace of an over-worked, over-burdened existence, the only consolation he had to fall back upon in the midst of the daily increasing troubles of a large family, and the difficulties of educating and providing for us all. My poor mother, who was of a nervous, excitable temperament, when we came in with our best—oftenest our only suit of clothes, tattered and soiled, to be repaired as best they might, by those indefatigable fingers of hers; or when three or four of us were saying our lessons to her, and the baby (the baby seemed a permanent institution at the parsonage) roaring all the while in her arms—would sometimes go almost wild with irritation at hearing the long-drawn-out notes of the violin proceeding placidly by the hour together from my father's little study. "And there he is, whining again!" she would sometimes exclaim, but she never asked him to stop, though she had to cast every sum up three or four times over, whenever the arithmetic and the violin went on together.

Little Mary and myself are the only members of the family who have inherited my father's fondness for music; and our great delight was to creep unperceived into the study, and lie hidden in the recess underneath his writing-table, while he stood up playing by the casement that opened

upon our little garden—his pale face growing dark and sharp against the twilight, and the carnations giving out all their odour in the quiet evening air. I can never smell a carnation now without hearing my dear father's "Bid me Discourse," or "Sally in our Alley," and those tunes will smell of carnations and feel of evening dew to me, to the last days of my life. The next music which I heard, was when I was sent up to London as a lad of sixteen to complete my education. I was quartered upon Philip Warde, an old friend and schoolfellow of my father's, and attended Westminster School daily.

Philip Warde had a splendid mansion (or at least what seemed so to me after our tiny parsonage) in Bloomsbury Square. He was a well-to-do lawyer, with six children—three boys and three girls. When I lived there, the eldest boy, Bill, was clerk in a respectable banking-house in the city; the eldest girl, Susannah, was nineteen—a fair likeness of her father, with the same sweet smile,* and the same lovely, *moral* countenance. Emily was sixteen, and little Ursula fourteen. Then came the two small boys, Bob and Harry, who were a good deal younger, and at school away down in the country.

In this house my musical taste was continually fostered and ministered to. Philip Warde, who was a remarkably handsome man of about five-and-forty, had not only the most winning speaking voice in the world, but also one of the finest basses it was possible to hear. He was altogether a delightful creature—handsome, happy, and good. He had married upon nothing when he was very young, and his plain little wife, who had cheered and supported him through all the troubles and struggles of their early life, loved him still in mature age with that sort of passionate adoration that seems generally only to belong to the fervent season of one's youth. They were both blessed with that greatest of all blessings—excellent animal spirits. What jolly Christmas parties we used to have to be sure, when Philip led off Money-musk with Mrs. Warde, and we pounded away at Sir Roger de Coverley till three in the morning! All that is gone out now, and it is considered the right thing to shuffle about all out of time, as if one could not hear the music, and as if one did not know how to dance, and could not bear it. But in those days, a thing to see were Philip's handsome legs, in tights fitting close to the shape all the way down to the ankle, doing such intricate steps, footing it so daintily to the measure, and every now and then cutting the most lovely capers to excite the admiration of us youngsters. When the clock struck twelve we used to go down to supper—such *negus*! such calves-foot jelly! such *tipsy-cake*! I used to think there was nothing like it! Indeed it would have been difficult to find anywhere a happier family circle.

Glee-singing was the music most successfully cultivated in this house: Bill sang tenor, with capital lungs of his own; sweet Susannah Warde was soprano, Emily took the alto, and Philip's deep voice came growling

tunefully in, in the depths below, like a magnificent organ. All Calcott's and Horsley's charming glees they used to sing—and quaint old madrigals of another day, that rippled away sunnily like intermingling streams of clearest water: the long habit of singing together, and the kindred quality of the voices, made their execution of this kind of music absolute perfection. Then on Sundays Handel used to be the order of the day. Philip would sing, "Shall I, in Mamre's fertile plain," and sweet Susannah Warde would give us, "What though I trace," and then we always wound up with, "O ruddier than the cherry," which was Philip's great song, of which his wife was justly proud, and which she always would ask for, saying that though it was not sacred it was Handel, which meant nearly the same thing.

Ah dear old time! Ah gentle people! The dark years have divided us, but you are not forgotten.

In Lent, Philip Warde would often take me to the oratorios that used to be given at the great theatres on the Wednesdays and Fridays, which during that season were devoted entirely to musical performances.

My first oratorio was a memorable event in my life: I thought it so then, with life before me—I think it so still, looking back upon it now that I have lived. We were to have the *Israel in Egypt*. In general Mr. Warde was punctuality itself, but on this occasion he had been detained by unexpected business, and dinner was a whole hour later than usual, instead of half-an-hour earlier, as it was to have been. At every ring of the bell, I, and the girls in their white frocks and blue sashes, dashed out upon the stairs to see if it was the master come home, and at each fresh disappointment I felt almost ready to cry with impatience. I kept looking at the bill, and felt sure that every piece of music I most wished to hear would be over by the time we got there; and indeed it was very late when we reached the theatre, and the performance had long been begun. We flew along the lobby, and hastily taking our places in the dress circle, came in for the concluding bars of a magnificent chorus. After which a little thick-set man, with a light brown wig all over his eyes, a generally common appearance, and most unmistakably Jewish aspect, got up to sing one single line of recitative. He stood with his head well on one side, held his music also on one side, and far out before him, gave a funny little stamp with his foot, and then proceeded to lay in his provision of breath with such a tremendous shrug of his shoulders and swelling of his chest, that I very nearly burst out laughing.

He said—"But the children of Israel went on dry land"—and then he paused; and every sound was hushed throughout that great space; and then, as if carved out upon the solid stillness, came those three little words, "*Through the sea!*" And our breath failed, and our pulses ceased to beat, and we bent our heads, as all the wonders of the miracle seemed to pass over us with those accents—*awful, radiant, triumphant, triumphant!* He sat down while the whole house, *triumphed the applause.*

I turned to Philip Warde in speechless agitation. "Braham!" said he, wiping his eyes.

I often afterwards heard this greatest singer of our country, who was, doubtless, among the greatest of any age or country; but although the stamp of genius was on everything that he did, strangely mixed up with it was a love of gallery popularity, which led him continually into faults of taste. What could exceed the profound pathos of his "Deeper and deeper still?" His "Lash me into madness" still rings through all my fibres: but then again, just at the end of "Waft her, angels," with which he had seemed to lift one into paradise, he must needs roar out an interminable cadence, hideous and vulgar, for which the gods cheered him, but for which in sober truth he deserved to be hissed.

Little Bob and Harry used to find the first parts of these entertainments rather dry work, but would wake up for the third part, which was always miscellaneous, and which I hated: I always used to come down from the sublime altitudes of old Handel upon the dull earth again with a sort of bump; but they delighted in the lighter music; and indeed Mr. Braham's singing of such songs as, "When the lads of the village," "Let us go to Kelvin Grove," "March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale," and the "Bay of Biscay," was every bit as spirited and fine, as perfect in its accent and expression, as his pathos and dramatic genius were unsurpassed in the greater things he did.

The only friendship I made at Westminster was with little Lord Winterton. He was a sickly little lad of about fourteen, with continual headaches; and our intimacy grew, first, out of my preventing his being bullied because he could not play much and rough it as the others did,—and then, out of my looking after him, and lending him books when his family were abroad and he broke his arm out sliding and was laid up and lonely.

He had several sisters, of whom he used occasionally to make mention when we had become chums, and who sang most beautifully, according to his account. I used to tell him of our music in Bloomsbury Square, and then he would say with the most provoking coolness: "Ah, you should hear Lady Jane sing!" This was his favourite sister, and he often spoke of her when he was ill and I came to sit with him. Once or twice we nearly quarrelled when I was vaunting Miss Warde's singing, and he only remarked with a languid superiority, and as if he had heard all the world: "Ah, you haven't heard Lady Jane!"

The fact was, that about this time I was fast growing out of the mere schoolboy into the sentimental phase of hobbledoyhood, and Elizabeth Warde was the first woman whom I was beginning to look upon as a woman.

I had often heard her say, after we had been talking of my dear old father and the life at home, that she thought the perfection of happiness must be to live in a dear little cottage all homelyties and carolings,

with a gentle-hearted, hard-working country curate for a husband: and forgetful of the years that lay between us, and fired with a new tumult of almost unacknowledged hopes, I bent all my thoughts towards the church, and implored my father to send me to Oxford. Poor man! He could ill afford to spare the necessary sum of money for this fresh expense, and I fretted myself and my mother nearly into a fever with my anxiety and impatient restlessness. Luckily—I did not think so then—they were not called upon to make the sacrifices they were prepared to make for the fulfilment of my desire.

Just at this time, Susannah went to pay a visit of a month to a married friend of hers who lived at Woolwich; and when next I heard from the Wardes, (I was at home at the parsonage then,) it was to tell me that she was going to be married to a Captain Knockam Garth. It was not a good marriage in a worldly sense, but they were not worldly people. Philip Warde, who doted on his daughter, was greatly upset when he first heard of the engagement, and rather inclined to oppose it; but the mother remembered her own early days, and made her husband remember them, and their own true young love; and so finally his objections were overruled, and Captain Garth became an accepted lover.

As there was some probability of his regiment being soon ordered upon foreign service, a very few weeks only intervened between the engagement and the marriage. They were very wretched weeks to me, and I shame to say it, in my selfish, jealous passion, I made them so to all around me. I was bitter against the whole world, and sore about everything.

Sometimes I thought with contempt and almost hatred of her for having, as I chose to represent it to myself, sacrificed a true love to the false glitter of position; while the facts were, that Captain Garth was as poor as a church mouse, and that she had never felt anything for me but the sort of sisterly regard a kind-hearted young woman of her age, and with brothers of her own, was almost sure to experience for an awkward friendless schoolboy, living in the same house. But this, the true aspect of the matter, was too mortifying to my pride and vanity to be entertained for a single instant, and I preferred thinking myself the victim of a woman's fickleness and treachery: it invested me, in my own eyes at least, with a dignity and importance which were more flattering to my feelings. Sometimes I used to wonder whether she would *dare*—(I actually put it so to myself,)—whether Susannah would *dare* to bid to her wedding the man she had so deeply wronged. Then as the time grew near and nearer, and no sign came from any of them, I had fits of absolute rage against them all, that in their idiotic delight at what I was pleased to call this new thing, I, their old dear friend, was laid by and unremembered. And then my rage all went out suddenly like a spent flame, and I would lie for hours far away in the fields, crying my heart out for the intolerable aching desolation, the grievous grievous pain of their having forgotten me.

At this time my poor mother, too, became a source of the greatest annoyance to me. My father was a good deal away from the house, and always very absent and preoccupied when he was in it; but my mother saw well enough that something was going badly with me, I daresay she had even made half a guess at the truth, for in matters of the heart all women—the very dullest—become sharp, and I noticed that she never once mentioned Susannah's name to me. Her tender pity would flow out to me in a thousand little acts of watchful affection; but any unusual demonstration of this kind only made me imagine that I was looked upon as an object of compassion, and this I resented bitterly, beyond all measure. Then when I had met her warmth with coldness, scaring her into silence either with sullen sarcasm or savage irritability, and she no longer ventured to take me in her arms and question me, or make troubled remarks upon my white face and feverish hands, she would follow me with tearful looks wherever I moved about the room, until I used to rush from the house in a state of perfect frenzy, that I might escape from the unceasing importunity of those wistful mother's eyes. I was very mad, and very bad, and—God forgive me for it!—I still thought that before the end—the end of all—was consummated, some one must surely take some notice of me. But no! One by one the days passed, and no letter arrived. Then a dreadful day—the date of which I well knew—came too, and rolled heavily away, and still no sign!

Two mornings afterwards a packet was brought to me; it contained a white favour, a large piece of wedding-cake, and a letter from Mrs. Warde. I tied the favour on our tomcat, and gave the cake to the children; but the letter was so kind and tender that I could not bring myself to tear it up. It was as follows:—

“DEAR JOE,—

“THE marriage is over, and our dear girl has left us. And now that I sit down with her empty chair beside me—that chair where she has sat, our pride and our joy, for so many years—my eyes and my heart are full of tears, and I can't help thinking of you, dear Joe, and writing to you, for I think you will want to hear from some of us to-day; and as the young ones are all too much excited just at present to settle down quietly to pen and paper, you must put up with my account of matters, though I fear I shall not be able to write quite as cheerfully as I ought. Captain Garth is about thirty-five—just thirteen years older than Susie; but this I think quite a fault on the right side, especially where the life is likely to be so full of ups and downs, and changes and movement. She isn't used to roughing it much, poor dear!”—[here a great drop blots the paper]—“and will want some one who knows how to take care of her as well as to love her.

“Captain Garth has a loud, firm voice, and seems, I think, to have a very decided character; but this is certainly quite an advantage, and pro-

bably after all, only his military way, to which I am not yet used. They are gone to Scarborough for a fortnight, his leave, at present, not extending beyond that time, and then they are to join the regiment, which is stationed at York.

"The breakfast went off capitally. There were a number of toasts and speeches : Philip spoke quite beautifully, as he always does ; at least he began beautifully—saying what an honour he thought it for his daughter to be the wife of a brave man ; but when, as he went on, he touched upon all the vicissitudes of a soldier's life, the hardships and the dangers—and often the long years of exile in distant lands—a thought of all our poor Susie might be exposed to—she who has been so petted and fostered, and kept in cotton all her life—came across him, and he suddenly got as white as a sheet, and could not go on ; and poor Susie, who had kept up wonderfully till then, burst into tears, and jumped up from table, and ran into his arms. I was afraid Captain Garth might be hurt, for he coloured scarlet, and said not a single word. However, uncle James was there, and saved us all ; for he got up and made a first-rate speech, full of puns, which set all the girls laughing, and so we ended better than we began.

"You were not forgotten at the breakfast, dear Joe. 'Absent friends' were drunk, and then Susie put another drop of wine into her glass, and added, 'And here's dear Joe, and God bless him !' My dear boy, I hope that by-and-by it may be a pleasure and comfort to you to remember this little word. Philip and Susie were both very anxious to have you up for the wedding ; but I thought that perhaps you would not care to come to us just then, and said I thought your own people must be wanting you themselves after having been so long without you. I hope you have not been vexed at not hearing from us before, but I thought it better not to write till all was over.

Your truly attached friend,

SARAH WARDE.

And so I burned the white rose she had stuck into my button-hole one day when we had gone to a picnic in Greenwich Park, and the bit of mistletoe under which I had kissed her last Christmas, when we both blushed for the first time, and I felt with a rush of blood to my heart that she had suddenly—all in a single instant—become Eve to me. And I went to my father and told him I had finally made up my mind to give up the church and take to tutoring ; which would at once relieve him of much anxiety on my account, and for which on the whole I felt myself a great deal better fitted. The fact was, with the loss of Susannah, all ambition was gone out of me ; I had come to my senses, and with them also to the conclusion that the less trouble I gave now in any way the better.

I first got a very satisfactory situation in Cornwall, where I remained

for about two years, and then spent the next three years in the family of an Irish gentleman who lived not far from the lovely lake of Killarney. After which I heard of what seemed likely to prove a very good thing if I did not mind India; and feeling that an entire change was the only thing likely to shake me out of a state of despondency and discouragement that was becoming too habitual with me, I made up my mind to close with the offer which had been made me.

It was a great shock to the people at the parsonage when I announced my intention to them. But, after all, I had already been away three years in Ireland without ever coming home; this was to be an absence of only five or six—(alas! it became one of five-and-twenty; but at the moment of our decision this was little anticipated)—and the remuneration, which was most liberal and to be increased with time, would allow of my sending home annually a considerable sum of money to be devoted to the education of my brothers.

My favourite sister, Mary, was at this time about to become a governess: she was admirably gifted for this career, and had been brought up with a view to it. She knew French fundamentally, though of course she could not speak it: she was, thanks to my father, a very good Latin scholar; and thanks to her own industry and passion for music, a fair performer on the pianoforte. Our instrument was but a poor one, having belonged to my mother when she was a girl—she brought it with her to the parsonage when she married my father, and with it her old music-books, a few odd volumes of Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart—it was all old-fashioned together, but we owed to it some of the happiest moments of our lives.

After failing in one or two attempts to procure a situation for her, one now offered which seemed to promise very favourably; but the money for her outfit, slender as that was, was not forthcoming just when it was wanted, and could only be got together by keeping the boys at home and on my mother's hands for another year. Now they had long been of an age to go to school; but though very good-hearted boys, it was not in the nature of their youth and vigorous temperament not to be somewhat narrowly and noisy, and my poor mother, who at her best had never been very strong, had broken down a great deal in the last years, and stood much in need of a rest and quiet that she seemed but little likely in this life to obtain. My Indian project turning up just at this juncture, solved many of these difficulties in an unlooked-for way, and reconciled us all more or less to the pang of parting.

One day, not long before my departure, as I was running along Bond Street in quest of portmanteaus and hat-boxes, I ran up against a fine, tall, stout young fellow, who, taking hold of me by both shoulders, called out, "Why, halloo, old fellow, where are you cutting to in such a hurry?" It was little Winterton grown out of all his ill-gates and ailments into this magnificent specimen of a man. He was going home to luncheon, and

insisted on carrying me along with him to Portman Square. We found his mother at table with a bevy of charming young ladies, to whom I was in turn presented. There was Lady Mary, with her silvery voice and delicate skin; and Lady Caroline, straight and tall, and with something of a will of her own or I am much mistaken. But indeed I could hardly look at anybody for a vision of loveliness that seemed to brighten the whole room, and that came up to me with a sweet graciousness and a sunny face all dimpling with tender smiles, and holding out both her little hands, said, "How good you were to George! I'm sure he must have talked to you about me—I'm Jane."

Sitting at table with them, drinking porter and eating voraciously, was a stout elderly foreign gentleman with a smooth face and great animation of manner. This was Signor Donzelli, a very famous Italian tenor singer, who had formerly given lessons to the young ladies, and who was only for a few days in England. After luncheon we went upstairs, and Lady Jane and Lady Caroline dragged him to the piano and insisted on his singing. After many entreaties and protestations on one side and the other, he began his most celebrated air out of Rossini's *Otello*, "*Ah si per voi già sento*," but he broke down in the middle, burst out laughing, and seizing them by the hand, exclaimed, "*C'est impossible! vous êtes deux charmantes filles, mais je ne puis pas chanter—je suis trop plein!*"

He appeared to have little or no execution, but it was one of the noblest voices I ever heard: a manly, robust, sonorous, low tenor, more like the very high baritones of the present day than anything else. He afterwards sang two or three bits of recitative, which were much finer than the song, which had a little wanted finish, and was rather too uniformly loud to my thinking. The best of all was one that began with the words, "*Svanir le voci*," and which they told me was out of an opera called *Norma*, by Bellini. It was a grand piece of declamation: I never heard so perfect an enunciation; not a word was lost, and the separate syllables beat singly upon the ear like so many distinct musical blows.

When I took my leave, they told me they were going to have some music in the evening, and begged me to come and hear it. I inquired if Signor Donzelli was to sing. "Oh, no," said Lady Jane. "Ours is only an amateur performance, and Mr. Rivers don't like his singing; he says he hawls too much, and that it is insufferable in a room. You will hear Mr. Rivers to-night. We have no less than four tenors, all so jealous of one another!—Mr. Enderleigh, Mr. Frank Rivers, Mr. Cholmondely, and Lord Manvers; but Mr. Rivers is the best, and we are going to sing a quantity of things he has brought with him from Italy."

As the clock struck ten, I presented myself in Portman Square, and found myself the only man among the ladies, for the guests had not yet begun to arrive, and the gentlemen had not left the dinner-table. The ladies received me very kindly, but I never was more uncomfortable in

my life; I felt so thoroughly in the way, and a fish out of water. There were no subjects of common interest between us—how should there be? Of their habits I knew nothing, and what experience could they possibly have of a life hidden away in the shade like mine? We had exhausted George's health at luncheon, and upon the only topic upon which we could converse—music—I soon found that we did not agree; my early taste had been formed upon the masters almost exclusively cultivated in my own home—Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, and old Corelli—but with these I found my new friends but little acquainted, although they unhesitatingly pronounced them to be dull and tiresome. I then thought I would try a lighter style, and spoke of Purcell and Dr. Arne, but here I was hardly more successful. Of these composers they were entirely ignorant. I, in my turn, knew nothing whatever of Rossini and the Italian music they delighted in, and so conversation very soon began to flag, and to be filled with a gradually rising tide of awkward pauses. What made me feel still more embarrassed was the presence of a lady with whom I was not acquainted. I never saw anything more striking than this lady's appearance. She was a beautiful woman of apparently about six- or seven-and-twenty, tall and slight, and with a handsome figure. She had a remarkably small, well-shaped head, with dark hair, eyes, and a wonderful white complexion, with just the very faintest tinge of colour exactly in the right place. I remarked this with admiration to Lady Mary, who replied in her sugary voice and with an odd little laugh, "Yes; she always puts it in the right place, don't she?" Her dress was very peculiar, and added to the picturesqueness and brilliancy of her appearance. She wore a scarlet velvet gown and a magnificent white rose in her bosom.

This person, my dear Lady Jane told me, was one of her cousins, Lady Charlotte Malcolm, or I never could have believed they could have belonged to the same family, she looked so dreadfully hard and bold; and she certainly had none of their good breeding or good nature, for having, when I came in first, asked, in so loud a whisper that I couldn't but hear her, who I was, and then remarked that I was a good-looking beast, she declined having me presented to her, and took no further notice of me whatever, beyond putting up her horrid eyeglass at me and giggling upon every observation I addressed to other people; each time she did so, making me grow as red as the colour of her own gown. Before the people came, I was taken through the rooms by Lady Caroline and Lady Jane. I think they were rather ashamed of their cousin's bad manners, and very good-naturedly made this an excuse for getting me out of her reach.

This evening in Portman Square was altogether a revelation to me. In the first place I had never seen any house at all like it. I had been living exiled in a very desolate sort of barrackry ruin in Ireland for the last few years, and almost the only civilised social recollections I had were

of the dear old house in Bloomsbury; but this was a very different matter in every respect.

In Bloomsbury we had one good-sized drawing-room, opening with low narrow yellow folding doors into a back room a good deal smaller. The variety of arrangement, and the quantity of furniture in Portman Square, made it a matter of some anxiety to steer one's way clear on any side. In Bloomsbury we used to have no difficulties of this sort to struggle with: the pianoforte stood against the wall in one room, and a hard little sofa, with a shaped back and scroll end, against the wall in the other: there were only two arm-chairs in each room, and these stood symmetrically on either side the fire-place. In the centre of both rooms was a round table: that in the front drawing-room had a cloth cover of light green stamped with black upon it; the table in the back room had no cloth: it was of dark mahogany, and overspread with pretty little knick-knacks in Bohemian glass and Tunbridge ware. In this room the paper was a rich buff flock; but the paper in the front room was the one I used to admire the most: it had a bright pink ground, with a pattern something between a cathedral window and a gridiron done in gold all over it. How well I recollect the day it was put up, and how splendid I thought it looked when the great glass chandelier was lighted, to try the effect! Miss Bird, the governess, was sent for, with little Ursula, from the school-room, to come and see it; and I remember as if it were yesterday, how she stood before it in her plum-coloured gown, with her red muffedettes and her chilblainy hands clasped, exclaiming rapturously over and over again, "And such a lovely idea, isn't it?" as if that was a charm entirely separate from the paper, and the one she chiefly appreciated.

There were four drawing-rooms in Portman Square—two immense middle ones of grand proportions, with white and gold walls and gorgeous crimson curtains. These were brilliantly lit all round with wax candles, and the pianoforte stood quite out at the end of the largest room of the two. Leading out of this apartment, behind the head of the piano, was what was called the young ladies' study. This was hung with pale sea-green satin of an exquisitely delicate shade. It would be impossible for me to describe it in detail; but I remember that the sofas and chairs—which were of all shapes and sizes, some Lilliputian, some Brobdingnagian—were covered with garlands of roses in soft old tapestry-work, which had preserved the liveliest and freshest tints. Against the walls were two cabinets of ebony inlaid with ivory, and over these hung two noble Sir Joshua portraits of ladies of the family. There were also three or four beautiful drawings of Lawrence's, and some charming water-colours by Copley, Fielding, and De Wint. The room that was at the other end of the suite, was of circular form, hung with silver grey velvet, and contained about half-a-dozen first-rate Vanderken. The ceilings here were of deep violet colour, and the furniture, which I admired very much, they told me

was old French. There were beautiful inlaid *secrétaires*, costly bureaux of quaint shape, and at one end a gorgeous old French writing-table, and everywhere, by each luxurious sofa or inviting arm-chair, little inlaid tables of green and brown woods, of the most exquisite forms and workmanship. It was altogether quite different from Bloomsbury, and on the whole, certainly much prettier.

When once the guests began to arrive, they continued pouring in very quickly, and the rooms were soon filled to suffocation. I was very curious to see Mr. Rivers, whose name was mentioned among them every five minutes—his opinions quoted, and his authority appealed to. It was evident he must be a very important and fashionable person, and I thought he must be some great lord's son at least; but I found to my surprise that, although he was connected with almost all the noble families of England, he held no rank whatever himself; he was not even an Honourable. I felt sure I should know him at once, either by his supremely dandified appearance, or by his superior good looks, although how he was to be handsomer than the men who were already there it was difficult to imagine. For I do not think I ever was so struck with anything as I was with the general beauty of this assembly—both men and women seemed like creatures of another world to me. Now we had only one other pretty girl besides Susannah Warde in Bloomsbury—Georgina Battersby, her great friend—and I could not help thinking how dowdy and insignificant she would have looked among these people.

There was one whole family of three sisters and two brothers, who, when they came in, quite took away my breath with the splendour of their appearance. Mrs. Wentworth, with her classical head and straight nose, made one think of "The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece, where burning Sappho loved and sung." Indeed she might have been Sappho herself, for they told me she was a genius as well as a beauty. Her youngest brother, who was not more than nineteen or twenty years old, was without exception the most radiant human creature I ever beheld. Without being at all unmanly or effeminate, he was as lovely as a woman, and had the voice and smile of an angel: one wondered what this glorious young Greek god was doing, so far away from Olympus.

Then there was cream-coloured Mrs. Henry Wharton, beautiful from "her melancholy eyes divine, the home of woe without a tear," down to the sole of her foot. I never saw anything to equal the shape and colour of her hands, arms, and bust; but I felt nervously ashamed of looking much her way, her clothing having for the most part resumed itself into a bunch of violets. I mention these merely as some of the most remarkable persons that I saw, for I stood near the door, and I declare that almost every one who came in was handsome, or at least well-looking: all were well grown and had fine skins.

"My dear, hadn't you better begin?" said Lady Winterton, coming up to where I was sitting with her daughters.

"Mr. Rivers isn't come yet, mamma, and we want him for 'Cielo il mio labbro,'" answered Lady Jane.

"Never mind, my dears. It's past eleven o'clock, and you had better begin with something else," returned her mother.

"Oh, we can't indeed, mamma," said Lady Jane anxiously, adding suddenly, "Oh ! there he is—I see him !" as a tall, fair man, with light hair and auburn whiskers, perfectly simply dressed, and carrying a heap of music in his arms, fought his way vigorously up the stairs. He was certainly very good-looking, but that was not what struck me most about him. It was his bright countenance, his air of distinction, and when he spoke the pleasant voice and charm of entire unaffectedness that were so winning.

"Did you ever see such a crowd ?" said Lady Winterton, as he wished her good evening.

"Yes, and all standing about, so as to prevent one's being able to stir ; so English that is ! My dear Lady Winterton, half of it is your fault, because you always will stick tables before your sofas. Just look at that row of people all standing with their backs to the table, instead of getting in and being quiet, and making room for others. It really must be moved—you lose more than half your space that way. Would you mind——?" he said, looking at me, and in two minutes we had got the obnoxious piece of furniture out of the way against a wall, and four ladies were instantly seated on the hitherto untenanted sofa. Mr. Rivers was so pleased with this result, that he made me go round with him and remove all the other tables. It really was an immense improvement, although I must own I felt rather nervous as we approached one at which three or four elderly ladies and gentlemen were seated, looking over some political caricatures and reviews.

"I'm afraid," said I, hesitatingly, to Mr. Rivers, "we shan't be able"——but——

"We're going to push that table up into the corner, if you don't mind," said he, briskly, lifting the lamp and making off with it as he spoke, leaving the people he addressed in benighted amazement.

"It'll be much better there, won't it?" he said with a smile, as he came back for the table.

One cross-looking old woman, who was not at all inclined to be pleased, waggled her head angrily at him and said, "I was reading, and I don't think so."

"Oh, yes, you do," he replied, with that delightful smile of his. "Besides, you don't want your book now, you know ; you're going to listen to us." And he rolled the table away as he spoke.

Our programme consisted of the following pieces, with some of which I was acquainted :—

"Cielo il mio labbro"—a quartett from Rossini's *Diavola e Follie*, pompous, splendid, and well sung. "Tu vedrai la sventura"——an air

from the *Pirata*, by Bellini. This was sung by Mr. Endersleigh very carefully, but rather through his nose: it was of those good things that do not give one much pleasure. Then came a duet from the same opera, sung by Mr. Rivers and Lady Caroline. They both had very fine voices (he, a brilliant high tenor, and she soprano,) and a degree of cultivation that was quite remarkable.

Mr. Rivers was very nervous and fidgety at first; the person who was to have accompanied the duet, for some reason that I could not catch, did not please him, and he declared he would not sing unless some one else could be got to play. This alteration was with a little difficulty at last effected.

"Do, for heaven's sake, let us begin: these pauses ruin a concert," he said, exactly as if the delay had been caused by some one else instead of himself. "I never saw such a horrid public in all my life—all women! It's quite killing to have to sing to people who won't ever express anything. Do applaud, there's a dear good man" (this to me). "I give you my word my mouth's exactly like a clothes-brush! Mind you play my notes," was his parting injunction to the accompanier, and they started. But he suddenly caught sight of Lady Charlotte Malcolm, who was talking and laughing loud in the front row; and leaving Lady Caroline with her mouth wide open, singing her solo, he exclaimed, "It's quite impossible to do anything serious with that dreadful giggling going on just opposite one;" with which observation he went straight across to her, and an animated little interview took place between them, in which I could just catch the words, "Want to converse—boudoir—disturb other people." She would not move, but she held her tongue afterwards, at least whenever Mr. Rivers sang, which I was very glad of, for she had talked incessantly all through poor Mr. Endersleigh's air.

This duet of the *Pirata* appeared to me to be rather a poor and disjointed composition, with some pretty melodious phrases spotted about here and there over it. I make no doubt it would have been far more effective on the stage, for the words and situation were evidently very dramatic. Not understanding Italian, I didn't of course know what it was about, but it was obviously a desperate love-duet, and highly tragic. Frank Rivers sang it with immense expression, and turned round to me repeatedly with a countenance beaming with delight, to which his remark of "Ain't it so miserable?" made a very comical contrast. After this Mr. Cholmondely sang, "A te, o cara," from the opera of the *Puritani*. He had a pretty voice, but I confess I wondered at his self-confidence, for he had not the slightest idea of time; and the accompanier, and those who sang with him, had hard work to follow him. It was a horrid manner of what appeared to me a charming thing: but many of the ladies seemed enchanted, and so did he himself; and one gentleman came up to me and remarked, "It's better than Rubini; and it's all by ear—he doesn't know a note of music!"

"So I should have imagined," I began to reply, when Lady Jane gave me a nervous little push, and in a low voice imparted to me the information that I was speaking to Mr. William Cholmondely, the younger brother of the gentleman who had just performed.

We then had a duet between Lady Caroline and Lady Jane. This was called "*Ebben per mia memoria*," and was from Rossini's opera of the *Gazza Ladra*. It was sung with feeling, style, and excellent execution, and was altogether more like the work of artists than of amateurs. Lady Jane had a charming mezzo-soprano voice, her sister a brilliant and powerful soprano; and they understood each other's feeling and manner so well, that their singing together went with the precision of a single voice. After this, Lord Manvers, a young nobleman with lovely eyes, sat down to accompany himself. Of his performance I really was unable to judge, for he executed nothing in its entirety: he did nothing but warble, with a very sweet voice, little melodious beginnings and endings, and I believe he would have been there to this very hour, exciting the black ire of the other tenors, but for Frank Rivers, who at last, in that irresistible way of his, broke in with, "My dear fellow, sing, or get up; we shall be charmed if you will really sing any one thing through, but if you can't or won't, you'd better get up and let us go on. That kind o' thing is so tiresome, and we shan't get through the programme to-night."

. After this came a fine thing out of Rossini's *Tancredi*, beginning with "M'abbraccia Argirio." This was capitally sung, on the whole, by a Mrs. Harley and Mr. Endersleigh: he, as before, a little melancholy and nasal; but the lady had fire enough for two. She had been a pupil of Pasta's, and declaimed heroically with a husky mezzo-soprano voice. The duet was succeeded by Bellini's romance of "*Ah non creder che pieno*," from the *Beatrice di Tenda*—a thing requiring the most perfect finish, which it received at the hands of Mrs. Wilmot, who dropped diamonds and pearls of notes without seeming even to take the trouble to open her mouth. And then we wound up with another frantic love-duet of Donizetti's, by Mr. Rivers and Lady Caroline. This was indeed a most desperate business; Frank Rivers worked himself into a terrible state over it, and again seemed quite enchanted with the misery of the sentiments he was expressing, several times ejaculating at intervals, "*O裴西涅!*" in an agony of grief, and then turning his bright face round to us with an ecstatic smile, and exclaiming, in tones of indescribable comfort, "*So wretched, ain't it?*"

On the whole, the Rossini music was much the finest of all I heard: it was more shapely and dignified than the rest, and although, in apparent obedience to some Italian canon of operatic form, it stuck on a quick movement at the end of every slow one, there was an expression and character about it which I found wanting in the other composers, whose last movements were almost all trivial and commonplace.

When every one was gone, with the exception of the gentlemen and

myself, we all adjourned to the round room, where a charming supper-table, covered with flowers and fruits, was prepared, and where we all sat down in wild spirits to talk over the concert and the events of the evening. I may say that I had quite an unexpected little success here, for upon Lady Jane's speaking of her cousin's insolent airs, and suddenly saying, "If one planted Charlotte, what flower would she come up?" I, who had often played at this child's game at home, and who had not quite forgiven Lady Charlotte for refusing before my face to be introduced to me, called out at once from the other end of the table, "London Pride!" which was received with general acclamation.

"And what would Jane come up?" asked Lady Caroline.

"Morning-glory," said I, as quick as light, looking at the fair young head opposite to me, crowned with its masses of golden hair: this was also much applauded. But the best of all was when Mr. Cholmondeley said,—

"And if one planted Frank Rivers, what would he come up?"

"Love-les-bleeding," said Lord Manvers.

"No, no," cried I, mindful of the "O Parisina!" and all the other agonies: "Love-and-tear-it!"—the name of the country-folk down in our part of the world for that mildest and most innocent of vegetable creatures, the mallow. The instant after I had said it I was afraid Mr. Rivers might be offended with my freedom; but no one laughed more, and he several times said, "So quick of him, so very droll," with the greatest good-nature and with evident enjoyment of the joke.

One more musical treat, and that the greatest, I have to record before my departure for India. This was at the house of Mr. John Grahame, one of our great city merchants, who was nevertheless content to reside in the city. I was invited to spend my last evening with them, and here I heard the glorious music of the *Don Juan* executed from beginning to end with the utmost reverence and care. An able professional man and excellent pianist, the master of the young ladies, accompanied it at the pianoforte. *Don Juan* was admirably sung by a Mr. Hepworth, a lawyer; Donna Anna was a professional singer engaged for the occasion; Donna Elvira, a young German lady, with a magnificent voice, a niece of my host, on a short visit to England; the youngest daughter of the house was the Zerlina, and sang her "Batti, batti," charmingly, accompanied quite capitally on the violoncello by an old admiral, an enthusiastic lover of classical music; the master of the house, who had a fine bass voice and great sense of humour, was our Leporello. Between the acts, Mozart's third sonata in F—the king of sonatas for four hands—was executed by the two eldest daughters of the house to perfection. This was the last music, deserving of the name, that I heard for five-and-twenty years.

I had gone out as a tutor to India, but in process of time I became acquainted with the head of a large mercantile house there, who recommended me to try business, and made an opening for me in his own

establishment. And there I remained, getting on in the world as it is called; but alas, for what? I ask myself this question sadly enough now that it is too late.

The first news of importance that I received from home was that of my sister Anna's marriage to a curate who came to do duty for a short time in a neighbouring parish. He was a widower with seven little children, but Anna wished it, and so an unwilling consent was wrung from my parents. Then followed closely the tidings of my poor mother's death; this was a heavy blow, and one that I hardly like to speak of even now. Some time after this my brother Walter wrote to inform me of his marriage and departure for Australia, where he was soon joined by my youngest brother Fred. Finally came the announcement of my father's decease from my poor sister Mary, who had been living at home with him and keeping house for him ever since he had become a widower. Her letter was a very pathetic appeal to me to come back to her: she was broken in health, pinched in circumstances, and quite alone in the world; and so I determined to return to England, to settle down in some quiet little home in the country, and devote the remainder of my life to my poor Mary, the dear companion of my early years.

At Calcutta I saw Susannah Warde again. She had been for the last twelve years in India, but we had never met. She had still the same sweet smile, but she was dreadfully altered. So much so, that if I had not heard her speak, and seen her smile, I don't think I should have known her again. She had suffered terribly from the climate, which was also telling severely upon her youngest child, a despotie, lead-coloured little urchin of about ten years old. She could not be persuaded to leave her husband and go to England herself, but was full of care and trouble about the boy, and exceedingly anxious to send him over to Europe for his health and education; and so it ended in my volunteering to take charge of him for her. Out of which arrangement, if any one thinks that I got any sort of satisfaction of a sentimental kind, I beg to state he is entirely mistaken: for the child has absolutely nothing of my dear old love Susannah; he is the living image of Knockham Garth; he has the same hard voice, and the "military manner" that poor Mrs. Warde had never got used to.

Almost the first person I looked up in London was Lord Winterton. I found him an elderly bachelor, a martyr to gout, and obliged to go about in a wheel chair. He was delighted to see me, as cordial and friendly as ever, and he asked Mary and me to come and dine with him. Here I met my old friend, Lady Jane, with her radiant face, and the lustre of her golden hair still undimmed by time: if she was no longer Proserpine, she was Ceres still, and she made me acquainted with another Jane, whom I might have taken to be the same I had left in England five-and-twenty years ago, so perfect a likeness of her lovely mother was this lovely daughter. Lady Jane was a widow; she had married a Sir Trevor

who had died, leaving her with this girl and a boy, and she now resided entirely with her brother, Lord Winterton.

During the course of the evening I talked over with Winterton my project of finding some modest little country home in which to settle down with Mary, and early the very next morning I received from him the offer of a charming little cottage quite close to his own fine place in Cornwall. The rent and taxes altogether only came to eighty-four pounds a year, and it is furnished, and has six bedrooms, so we shall always have a spare room for a friend, even while Knockham remains in our charge.

The few days I spent in town at this period were again chiefly devoted to music, of which I was naturally anxious to secure as much as I could, after having been so long deprived of it.

I went to the Italian Opera to hear Mozart's enchanting *Nozze di Figaro*. The house was very poorly attended, the stalls and boxes having only a thin sprinkling of people here and there. The music was sung with shameful carelessness, and the actors did not seem to think it worth while to give themselves the trouble to move. I was quite indignant at this disgraceful indifference; but was afterwards told that the Italians hate Mozart's music, which they consider tiresome and ineffective, and that also, in a general way, they seldom take the pains to exert themselves when the house is not full.

To make up for this disappointment, Winterton gave me a place in his box a night or two afterwards, to hear an opera which I was told was one of the great works of modern times. I remembered very distinctly the Italian music I had heard years ago—the brilliant effects and grand finish of Rossini, the agreeable vein of melody, somewhat poorly worked out, but always charming in sentiment, of Bellini—and I hoped to have all these delightful old recollections delightfully revived. I declare that, from beginning to end, it was one continual bang and shriek: such tune as there was, was of the very commonest order, and as for the story, it defied all comprehension, and beggars all description. I only know that there was a husband and wife who bawled a hideous duet at each other, with the veins in their throats swollen till I thought they would burst, and their eyes starting out of their heads at their own screams—and a mother who bawled because she had wanted to burn somebody else's baby, and then by a very unaccountable mistake had put her own baby on the fire instead; and then there was a man with the most extraordinary lungs I ever heard, who bawled for an hour together at the same pitch because his mother was going to be burned. Possibly there might be a degree of justification in the general unpleasantness of their positions; but then I ask, why choose fire for the libretto of an opera? There was at last a moment's respite in a commonplace but rather agreeable little duet towards the conclusion, where the lady who has burned the children goes to sleep, and therefore is obliged to cease bawling for a few seconds; and there were two pretty romances sung in lucid intervals by the tenor, one

at the beginning, and the other at the end when he is shut up in a tower. But, on the whole, the performance seemed to me very like the idiot's story, "full of sound and fury, and signifying nothing."

Upon consulting the play-bills, I found that for the remainder of the week no music was to be given except by the same composer, so this was my last operatic experience. But I had no reason to complain of any dearth of musical entertainment, for before I left town, far from desiring to seek it, at last my only aspiration became how to escape it. At every house I went to, it was served up as regularly in the evening as the dessert was after dinner, and my life in the morning was made a burden to me between street-singers, German bands, organ-players, and young ladies practising. I could not even pay my little bill at the news-vendor's without hearing the pianoforte going in the back shop.

Of the music I heard in society, what shall I say? Lady Jane Trevor procured me an invitation for a very fashionable morning concert at the house of one of her friends. Here, standing for two whole hours imbedded, imbrued, and suffocated in ladies' skirts, I heard chorus after chorus sung. The selection in itself was not a very good one, and the execution naturally imperfect enough: for how are twenty or thirty young folks to find time during a frantic London season to rehearse sufficiently often to make their singing together a really satisfactory musical performance? I myself heard the daughter of the house trying to persuade a young friend to join the ranks.

"Do come, dear, we want you so badly."

"But, dear, I don't know the chorus—I have never even looked at it," objected the young lady addressed.

"Never mind, dear," replied the other, "it will be one more voice, and we are so short of sopranos."

It was one more voice, and a great many more false notes. The solos and duets were all rather audacious; the young gentlemen had ears; at least, I was told of all of them that they sang by ear (which may be a wonder, but is not always a grace), and the young ladies had voices, and with these two elementary qualifications they apparently thought themselves quite warranted in standing up to sing operatic music which it would have taxed even professional singers to accomplish well. They all imitated the public performers of the day, and roared within an inch of their lives; it was a very different matter, both as regards art and culture, to the amateur music I remembered twenty-five years ago. Mrs. Horton, the great performer of the occasion, lovely to look upon, and possessing, moreover, the gift of a magnificent voice, amused herself with singing one ballad for all the world like a ventriloquist, it was so absurdly and unaccountably piece, and then singing another the whole way through at full stretch, so inexorably loud that one felt positively battered by the notes, which came about one's ears pelting one like a storm of round white billiard balls. Every one seemed enchanted with it, but I confess that I

me it appeared simply ridiculous. Lady Jane leaned across and whispered to me, laughing, "I think we did it better in my day," and I heartily agreed with her.

The only thing that gave me any real pleasure was the performance of a lady with a perfect glory of fair hair, who sat down to the piano and accompanied herself in one of Beethoven's sacred songs. The music was grand, and she sang it admirably. I asked one of my neighbours who she was: "Christian Rupert—Mrs. Rupert,"—was the answer. "Hasn't she a lovely voice? But it is such a pity she always will sing such tiresome things."

"Too beautiful!" said an enthusiastic lady on the other side. "Mendlesham, isn't it? I do dote upon Mendlesham, don't you? I always say Verdi and Mendlesham—Verdi and Mendlesham—nothing like 'em!"

After every one was gone, little Miss White, whose delicate thread of sound had been entirely swamped in a duet she had sung with a very violent dark gentleman with a tremendous bass voice, was persuaded to let us hear her again, or indeed, as might be said with more justice, to let us hear her for the first time, for before she had literally only been seen to sing. She accompanied herself in a number of little romances which were quite charming—the greatest merit of all being that she understood her own means thoroughly, and never attempted what she could not do to perfection. There was not much passion, but I declare this absence had become an absolute relief to me, and although the voice was rather thin in quality it had plenty of accent, great *sentiment*, and the most exquisite finish. Mrs. Rupert and herself were the only real artists I heard, and the former is, more's the pity, not to be heard often; she lives out of town, and therefore is not counted among the regular well-known London musical amateurs. I could not help remembering the affluence of other days. Lady Jane, Lady Caroline, Mrs. Harley, and Mrs. Wilmot—all first-rate, and all habitually singing music that very few professional singers of the present day are at all able to cope with. The same evening, having been invited very kindly to tea by my banker's wife, I had the gratification of hearing her daughter sing, first, the well-known tenor song of "Marta, Marta," from Flotow's opera of the same name, which she had, unfortunately, found some means of adapting to her own voice, and then, "Non ti scordar di me," the romance of the man in the tower, and then a friend of hers, with a fine contralto voice, gave us "Il balen," the bass song out of the same opera. After these three pieces, I made a futile attempt to depart, but was nailed by the mistress of the house, who would mount guard over the door and kept her eye well upon me, and I was condemned to come back again and listen to what was called a duet—accompanied on the piano by the daughter of the house, and performed, I cannot call it sung, between Miss Whickers, and her own concertina, which took what ought to have been the part sung by the tenor voice. Nothing can ever come up to the extraordinary songs

produced by this singular entertainment. Miss Whickers was a middle-aged young lady of fervid temperament, with a short thin eager figure, and a very long red nose; and what with her own passionate adjurations rendered even more irresistibly comical by her personal appearance, and the heartless, dumb responses, always a little out of time and never quite in tune, of the concertina, with which apparently, without any rhyme or reason, she would suddenly begin to play an ecstatic sort of game at pitch and toss, I was worked into such a state of nervousness by the ludicrousness of the spectacle that I felt at last as if I must have given way to some extraordinary manifestation or other: dashed down the piano—or flown at the concertina—or kissed Miss Whickers. At the conclusion, while my hostess was for an instant engaged with thanks and applause, I contrived at last to slip out, and as I hurried down, whom should I meet upon the stairs but my old acquaintance Mr. Hepworth. He was grown very old indeed, but he had a marked, peculiar face, and I knew him again at once. I inquired if he had kept his voice and still sang.

"Well, no," he said; "my boys don't care much for my music, they think it old-fashioned and dull."

"Have any of them inherited your fine voice?" said I; "are they at all musical?"

"Yes," he replied, "the eldest plays waltzes on the cornet-a-piston, and the youngest sings the Christy Minstrel melodies, and accompanies himself on the bones. He does it everywhere; he's going to do it here to-night: he's doing it at this very moment at another musical party—that's why he's late; but he'll be doing it here in five minutes. I'm so sorry you won't hear him." I couldn't echo the sentiment, but hastily bade him good-night, and thanked my stars for my escape.

During these ten days in town I seemed to be living in a chronic state of musical burlesque; for after having been stunned and deafened one day by hearing choruses sung in a space for which they never were intended, and were quite unfit, I went on another to an enormous public room to hear trios and quatuors of Beethoven's and Mozart's, led by the unrivalled Joachim, and some of Beethoven's sonatas played with exquisite delicacy and feeling by Hallé, who, having devoted himself principally to this order of music, executes it to perfection. The public was essentially a non-fashionable one, and, on the whole, behaved and listened very well. But the want of concentration, which is absolutely essential to the perfect enjoyment of this music, called especially *musica da camera*—chamber music—made itself painfully felt in this great public hall. How I longed for a magician's wand to make the unwelcome crowd vanish, and to find myself listening to these great men and their great interpreters, comfortably seated in a small space, with about a dozen intimate friends, all animated with the same love and reverence for these heavenly compositions, where the proportions of the room would allow the forte passages really to appear loud, instead of falling feebly and thinly into unlimited

space, and where the more delicate and tender inspirations would receive their full value and charm, and be felt profoundly and meagerly by an assembly consisting only of a chosen few, all tuned to the proper pitch of acute sensibility: this fine delight in the hearts of all, a subtle atmosphere most propitious to the best efforts of the artists themselves, who, undisturbed by the banging of doors, the audible whispers about places, and the prosaic rustle of non-conducting silks, would give back a hundred-fold what they received.

The fact is, that although this divine art is so generally cultivated, and apparently so much enjoyed, in reality it is neither properly appreciated nor sufficiently revered in England; in order that it should be so, an early apprenticeship to the highest class of music is absolutely necessary.

If I were the father of a family all the members of it should learn music. Almost all children have naturally good ears, and can catch tunes easily; and, strange to say, they are able to master the mysteries of time much better at an early age than they do later. Both girls and boys should be taught to play upon the pianoforte; which, although it wants the power of melting one sound into another—that touching human effect that some other instruments possess—is invaluable as bringing almost every variety of music within reach, and permitting one, through arrangements and adaptations, to become acquainted to a certain degree with nearly all the thoughts of the greatest composers. At a more advanced age I would have them learn the grammar of music, thorough-bass and harmony. The knowledge of the principles upon which the greatest men worked, and the examination of the manner in which they worked, would be a study of great interest, and could but add to the admiration with which they were regarded.

Those of my children who might happen to be great musical geniuses would only build the better for building upon such a foundation; and those who were not, having been taught by their early studies what real greatness is, and by the same process to comprehend what real littleness is also, in default of the charm of talent would probably achieve that of modesty, and instead of becoming indifferent executants, would resign themselves to being intelligent and understanding listeners—a race of which the world stands greatly in need. And let no one imagine that this is to be accomplished at an undue cost of time which would be better devoted to other things. Much more time is habitually given to an unsuccessful and incomplete musical education than this would require; good teaching and one hour and a half—no more—of daily practice, made the Miss Grahamas the accomplished pianists they were; and the steady reading of one single line of new music every day would very soon secure to any one who chose the invaluable power of playing with facility at sight.

When musical education is conducted upon these principles, we shall no longer have music fit only for the theatre brought into our drawing-

rooms, and our delicate drawing-room music exiled to places for which it is entirely unsuited. The effeminate slothfulness which makes people content to go on having their ears tickled by the old, beaten, worn-out forms from which such life as they ever possessed has long since departed, and leads them to seek those gratifications which make the least possible demand upon their own intelligence, will give way to the wholesome desire of a nobler pleasure at a nobler price, and they will gradually become willing to give of their best to the right understanding of the works of great men. Our musical entertainments would also undergo a considerable revolution in the matter of their duration; in proportion as they grew purer in quality, they would inevitably become curtailed in quantity; for it would be simply a moral and physical impossibility to give of one's best for the same number of consecutive hours that are now consecrated to a something—I will not call it music—which appeals to, not one of the higher faculties of our organization.

So, by degrees, our desire to feel and understand would bring with it its own reward, in a fruition of understanding and feeling, daily growing broader, deeper, and finer, until we could not fail to reach at last the most healthy of all musical and moral conditions—that in which we shall love most the thing which is best. Now to love anything sincerely is an act of grace, but to love the best sincerely is a state of grace. We cannot, however, hope to attain to these serene heights without considerable and consistent exertion of our own, for it is undoubtedly with the muscles of our minds as it is with those of our bodies; the healthful exercise of them doubles their strength, while those that are not used as they were given to be used, gradually wither away into premature impotence. "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath." A saying, the eternal wisdom of which is as universal as it is eternal, and which, if true as regards our worldly possessions, is yet more profoundly so as regards the precious faculties of our souls.



The Old Showman.

THE days of fairs are numbered; Bartlemy, "first and chiefest," has been abolished long since, and the glories of Greenwich are no more. Their fate was inevitable, for respectability, decency, was against them. The struggle was fierce and protracted, but the end came at last, and they passed away, bearing with them, let us hope, the spirit of brutal dissipation which used to characterize our English diversions. We have now become genteel in our vices, and think to rob them of half their evil by depriving them of all their grossness. Moreover, as railways increase, they create fresh centres of exchange and commerce, and obviate the necessity for so many of those curious scenes of bartering, cheating, guzzling, and fighting, known as fairs. The custom of statute fairs and wakes still lingers persistently in the Midland and Northern counties, but authority is exercised for their suppression whenever an opportunity occurs.

One of the most regular features of a fair, during the palmy days of the institution, was the theatrical booth, and one of the best known theatrical showmen of modern times was, beyond all question, old John Richardson. From Susarion and Thespis to John Richardson is a long step, and yet the travelling booth of the one was the lineal representative of the moveable stage and cart of the others. So much then for the antiquity and dignity of the showman's profession. Of old Richardson's claims to public notice not the least is that he was the last of a long line, and that with him the race of theatrical showmen may be said to have passed away. His show had an immense reputation in its day, and the old man himself was one of the stock amusements of London. No apology will, therefore, be offered for relating so much as is known of him.

Marlow in Buckinghamshire had the honour of his bringing forth. Whether, as has been suggested, he was related to the author of *Clarissa Harlowe*, because both were top-boots, we leave to the authorities of the Herald's College. Being at a tender age thrown upon the world by the workhouse of his native place, he made the best of his way to London, and engaged himself as an assistant to a cowkeeper. The exact sum of money which he was possessed of on reaching London is not known, but as he died rich, we may assume that his capital was the twopenny halfpenny with which so many millionaires have started. He was soon satisfied with the *scotch* agent, and joined the company of a Mrs. Pearly, which was then performing at a public-house in Shadwell. One of the Pearlys' *pieces* belonged to the Drury Lane Company, and played "*Aladdin*" in the *New Way to Pay Old Debts*, and such like *domestic*. Richardson's *share* was by no means a *success*. The *travelling* were *generally* *made*,

and the company would have been half-starved had they not been able to eke out their earnings by amusing the frequenters of the tap-room. Mrs. Penley's company afterwards played at Chatham and various places, but Richardson seems to have soon got sick of strolling, and to have settled down as a broker in Drury Lane. In this occupation he saved a considerable sum of money, and in 1796 entered on the speculation of taking the Harlequin public-house, near the stage-door of Drury Lane Theatre, which at that time was a great resort for all people concerned in theatrical affairs. The frequenters of his tavern seem in a very short time to have so far influenced his mind as to induce him to leave the "public," and go into the "travelling" line; a description of business which, having once engaged in, he never relinquished during a period of forty years.

The first appearance of "Richardson's Show" was at Bartlemy fair in 1796. At that time the travelling showmen (we speak of theatrical showmen) were simply showmen *et præterea nihil*,—mere common sort of fellows, for whom the vagabond life they led may have been the best fitted. But it would be wrong to suppose that this was always the case, or that, till within a few years before the period we are speaking of, the fact of keeping a theatrical booth was thought degrading by the profession. During the first three-quarters of the last century it was usual for players holding good positions at one or other of the patent theatres to open a booth in Smithfield in Bartlemy fair time. So much was this practice recognized, and so popular were the performances, that the regular theatres used not unfrequently to be closed during this period. Nearly all the proprietors of these booths, from 1700 to 1776, were actors of some celebrity in their particular line, which, it is worthy of remark, was usually low comedy. Among these may be mentioned Doggett, who by his acting contributed so much to the reputation of Farquhar as an author; Penkethman and Bullock, actors of good repute, and favourites with the galleries, although the satirical handling of the *Tatler* must have given them a notoriety which they did not altogether relish; Hippisley, Chapman, Hallam, and Miller, all actors known to fame. The last actors of any celebrity who appeared at Smithfield as rivals to conjurors, fire-eaters, giants, and dwarfs, were Yates and Shuter, as to whose reputation the reader is referred to the *Rosciad*. But greater than all was Henry Fielding. He succeeded to Penkethman's booth, and during the period of his connection with the fair, 1728-1737, he was joint proprietor at different times with Hippisley, Hallam, Reynolds, and Otway. His booth was generally situated in George Inn Yard, and we read in one of his advertisements, "The passage to the booth will be illuminated with several large moons and lanthorns for the conveniency of the passengers, and the coaches of persons of quality may drive up the yard." Sometimes Fielding acted himself with his company, which was generally from 1 Haymarket. At Fielding and Hippisley's booth, in 1733, the character and gauds Mrs. Fritchard (who made her first appearance at London).

fair in 1727) played the part of Loveit, in an opera called *A Cure for Covetousness; or, the Cheats of Scapin*.

It was when this generation of showmen had passed away that Richardson made his bow at Smithfield. His stage and theatrical fittings were at first of a very rude character. The first floor of a public-house was turned into a theatre, and the platform or parade, which was fitted up outside the window, formed an arch over the stalls of the sellers of gingerbread nuts and fried fish which stood below. The audience had to reach the theatre by means of a ladder, communicating from the platform to the fair. Twenty-one times a day were the unlucky performers called upon to go through their parts. The audiences were not very fastidious, and so long as they had a broadsword combat and a ghost, the actors were at liberty to play all sorts of tricks with the drama. The length of the performance was indeed usually regulated by the number of people waiting to enter the show. When it was thought that there was a sufficient quantity of visitors outside to form another audience, some one would be sent in to inquire in a loud voice if John Audley were there. This was a signal to the actors to cut the piece short; and to abridge a performance is very commonly called to "John Audley" it. This trick was first practised by Shuter at his booth in 1759. Whatever may have been the cause, it is certain that at first curses loud, deep, and comprehensive as that of Ernaulphus, were heard from Richardson's retreating patrons; but it was not long before he installed himself in popular favour. The performances of Bartlemy were repeated at Edmonton and other places, and at the end of the year our showman found himself the possessor of a good sum of money. With this he built himself two or three caravans ("carrywans" was his pronunciation), in which he could convey his company and properties from one place to another. This enterprise, however, proved unfortunate, and Richardson not only lost all his money, but became involved in difficulties. His good luck soon returned to him, and his show became one of the principal features of many of the fairs of the kingdom—Bartlemy and Greenwich being his head-quarters—but it was not until after many years and many hardships that he was enabled to give his show that appearance of splendour which we were accustomed to associate with it in our younger days.

It was during the earlier and less fortunate part of his pilgrimage, that he numbered Edmund Kean among his company. The old showman was not a little proud of this association, and used to give himself some credit for having had a hand in Kean's theatrical education. When Macready's name was becoming known in the dramatic world, Richardson was asked if he had seen him. "No, muster," he said, "I knows nothing about him; in fact, he's some wagabone as no one knows; one of them chaps as ain't had any addicition for the thing; he never was with me, an Edmund Kean and them riglers was." Kean's mother, Mrs. Giddy, a descendant of the unfortunate musician, obtained an engagement for herself and her children, Edmund and Henry, in the company of

Richardson, in whose bills Henry Carey's name figured for some years afterwards. The first performance of the family was to take place at Windsor. Between Slough and Eton, however, the caravan came to grief, and stuck fast in the mud. The misfortune being perceived by some Eton boys, they declared they would drag the caravan into the town without horses. Richardson, for various reasons, refused to agree to this, and the boys in revenge pelted the caravan as it passed the college. This, it is believed, is the only foundation for all the stories which have been set afloat concerning Kean's connection with Eton. The performances at Windsor opened with the *Magic Oak* and Fielding's *Tom Thumb*, in which Edmund played the hero, and his mother personated Queen Dollalolla. To his great surprise, Richardson received a note the next day requiring Master Edmund to come up to the Castle, and perform before the King (George III.) Kean's recitations took every one by surprise, and his wondrous ability was even then acknowledged. His mother, taking advantage of the royal favour, engaged the market hall, and reaped a considerable profit from Edmund's exhibition of his talents before the people of Windsor. The family afterwards rejoined Richardson's company, and remained with him for some time. The last time Edmund Kean played for Richardson was at Battersea fair in 1806. He performed "Norval" and also "Motley" in the *Castle Spectre*, receiving a salary of five shillings a night. Kean would often in his freer moments boast that by his tumbling outside Richardson's booth he had tumbled many hundreds of bumpkins inside.

It was not always fair weather with the old showman. At Cambridge once he was taken into custody for refusing to pay taxes for his ground, and would, with his whole company, have been committed to prison, but for the good offices of one Brunton, another travelling showman, who happened to be at Cambridge at the time. Richardson, however, opened his theatre, but the audiences were so scanty that he was nearly ruined, and starvation (to use the familiar phrase) stared him and his players in the face. Brunton again came to his assistance with five guineas, and with this sum the unlucky children of Thespis set out to "bust" their way home to London. Richardson thought at first to have raised some money by pledging his waggons and horses to the landlord of the inn where they were deposited; but he found that the landlord had already a lien upon them for the storage of the waggons and keep of the horses. With one van, then, the company had to set out on the way to town. In this they deposited the women and children, while the showman and two of his company went off in front to pick up what money they could by amusing the rustics with comic songs and so on. One of the house-guards was Tom Jefferson, a clown from Astley's. He was considered to be the best out-door clown of his day. He kept up a continual talk of a huge pocket full of gold; and when with his friends, his conversation, his mimicry, and his songs, he so completely won the hearts of the rustics, that the act of pulling down the waggons and the children

into a show. On this particular occasion Jefferies charmed the country folks with a comic song, having for its refrain a 'great amount of *tidi didi tol lol*, and he thereby caused such a flow of coin into the bankrupt exchequer as to enable the party to reach town in safety. The company bore their misfortunes with that light-hearted patience which distinguishes this peculiar race; and as for the manager, Haslitt pictured him when he wrote of that "fellow who floats over life as the froth above the idle wave; with all his little expedients and disappointments, with pawned paste buckles, mortgaged scenery, empty exchequer, and rebellious orchestra, he is little less happy than a king, though not much better off than a beggar." Richardson had to pay twice over before he could redeem his waggons, for his first messenger decamped with the cash.

As may be supposed, he often had great difficulty in guiding his self-willed company. He had to humour them a great deal to keep them in good temper with himself and each other. But on occasions he was compelled in self-defence to assume the managerial dignity, and deal out retributive justice to offenders. One actor, by name Grossette, gave him a great deal of trouble. He was an idle sort of fellow with an ineradicable distaste for clean linen and fair water; and those who remember anything of Richardson, who himself only performed the most necessary ablutions, must judge of the nuisance by the fact that he was obliged to discharge Grossette as being really too bad for association with decent strollers. Grossette went away, but reappeared a few days afterwards with clean linen and a very much improved appearance. He was allowed again to enter the company, and it was not discovered until long afterwards that on this occasion he had made free with the showman's own stock of shirts and neckerchiefs.

Richardson like other managers had to keep a sharp look-out for recruits; and he complained that he was being continually robbed of the best members of his company. It was during the winter, when there were no fairs going on, that he used to attend to this part of his business. On a visit of this nature to a private theatre in Queen Anne Street, he discovered the merits of William Oxberry, and engaged him to travel with his troop. Oxberry remained in Richardson's company for two seasons, and then took flight to higher spheres. On one occasion, as the company were travelling to Ascot races, some of them, Oxberry among the number, went on the water. The boat was upset, and the comedian was very nearly being drowned. It was the more unfortunate as none of them had a change of clothes, and they had therefore to hide in the caravan till their clothes were dry. Oxberry, whose darling buckskins did not so soon recover from the effects of a soaking as other less pretentious raiment, was seen next day walking about Ascot resplendent in Oriental costume. Among Richardson's company at this time, was Mr. Saville Faucit, the author of the *Miller's Maid*, and the father of the celebrated Helen Faucit. Richardson had the reputation of London as a

out a great many good actors, and some now before the public had their first lessons in his booth.

As we have before mentioned, Bartlemy fair was the scene of the old showman's principal performances. On this occasion he used to have his theatre re-painted and re-decorated, the cost of which, together with that of the new dresses supplied to the performers, reached no contemptible sum. The theatre when fitted up occupied one hundred feet of frontage. The outside platform or "parade" was at a considerable elevation, and the background was of-green baize, with crimson curtains depending here and there. The boxes of the money-takers were fitted up in the Gothic style, and adorned with columns and pinnacles. The platform was lighted by a large number of variegated lamps, disposed either as lustres or in wreaths. The band, which brayed continuously, consisted of about ten players, dressed in the style of beef-eaters. On one occasion they were dressed as bishops, but Richardson did not get all the credit he expected from this stroke of invention. The old man himself used generally to keep up a tremendous din on the gong, without which instrument he considered no theatre to be complete. This noise was made for the purpose of drawing attention to the show, and the effect of twenty or thirty different bands and gongs all going at once in different parts of the fair may be more readily conceived than described. The solemn and business-like manner in which Richardson used to rouse the echoes on this gong was the cause of much amusement, indeed his "outside play" altogether has been declared to be worth twice as much as the inside performances of many of his "regular" rivals. He was a shortish man, usually dressed in velveteen knee-breeches, worsted stockings, check or white neckerchief, an old brown coat, and a shocking bad hat. His critics in the press often quarrelled with him about his clothes, and even went so far as to suggest that at Bartlemy fair at least, he might have the decency to appear in a new suit, and that there need be no compunction in parting with old friends when they had begun to leave us. He was no dandy, it must be confessed. On this point we may quote a writer in Leigh Hunt's *Tatler*, who says—

Old Richardson remains alone ;
The last man of his race,
Wearing his old familiar face
And galligaskins.
For one would almost swear
They were the only pair
That eighteen years since bray'd the summer's bakings ;
Vest, coat, continuations, shew'd the same,
The voice, the gait, and eke the well-known name.

The company during the intervals of the performances paraded up and down the platform, either footing it to the lively strains of the band, or going through some other exhibition likely to draw the gaping crowds into the show. The clown was, however, the king of the parade, and when that part was filled by a good man, he was worth a great deal for his

outside acting alone. The dresses of Richardson's actors were always of the best, and were sometimes very costly. They were much better than those in use at the theatres, for, as the old man used to say, "I have to show my dresses in the daylight, and they must be good, while anything will do for candle-light." He would always choose an actor with stentorian lungs to shout the usual invitation—"Walk up! walk up! the players! the players! The only booth in the fair." He considered this a very important post, and what he called a *bould* speaker was pretty sure of getting the best of what there was in the Richardsonian pie. He left one hundred pounds to a Mr. Cartlish, who used to do this business, and whom Richardson always said he would remember, for he was "such a bould speaker, and might be heard from one end of the fair to the other." He was once applied to by an actor for an engagement. "Ha, muster," said he, "I remember you well. You was one of them bould speakers of the Coburg, but I cannot give you more than 30s. a week." This actor afterwards, to fill up the time, advanced to the front of the platform, and set up the usual shout. Just afterwards old John came running up in breathless haste, crying, "Where is that bould speaker? I must give him five shillings more a week, for I'm blessed if I didn't hear him down at the 'Brig,' which was a quarter of a mile off.

Inside the booth there was a painted proscenium with green curtains. The orchestra, which was lined with crimson cloth, contained five or six violin players in military costume. The seats of the audience were rows of planks gradually rising from the ground, and beyond a small reserved space between the orchestra and the front seats there was no distinction of boxes, pit, or gallery, although the bills always announced, boxes, 2s.; pit, 1s.; gallery, 6d. It was all gallery in fact. Some impression seems to exist that Richardson was a penny-showman. We do not know that it matters much, but still, as a fact, the entrance-money was never less than sixpence. As many as a thousand persons would sometimes be in the booth at once. Richardson was very anxious that order should be preserved, as he knew well that the persons constituting his audiences would have thought it rather a good joke than otherwise to pull the place down, and would have been glad of any opportunity to enter upon the operation. Sometimes a storm would arise, when the gentlemen in front would insist upon putting up their umbrellas to protect themselves from the rain which would at times come through the roof; loud disturbances followed, of course, but the appearance of old Richardson was usually sufficient to quell the riot. He had a great horror of having his booth fired by the reckless use of lucifer-matches, and would conjure any one whom he saw in possession of those articles to take the "prosperities" things elsewhere.

As to the pieces which were performed, a good idea of them will be gained from the recital of a few of their titles. Richardson's strong leaning was always in the direction of ghosts, and his long acquaintance with the public taste had led him to the conclusion that there was nothing

paid as well as a spectre. If a ghost could not make a piece successful, nothing earthly, in Richardson's opinion, could. His receipt for a drama was "unites for producing effect and cash into the bargain, a gang, blue or red fire, and a bleeding ghost." He expressed his opinion of the *School for Scandal* by saying that "it is a merry pretty piece; but don't you think it would have been better to have a little blue fire behind that screen when it came down?" His performances usually commenced with a melodrama, a pantomime followed, and a panorama wound up the entertainment. Among his bills we find the following pieces announced:—*The Monk and the Murderer, or the Skeleton Spectre*, "with scenery, dresses, and decorations by the first artists, also a view of the Rocks of Calabria, with the appearance of the mysterious monk, the mysterious forest, and a grand combat with shield and battle-axe;" *The Castle of Athlone and Dunblane, or the Spectre of the North*; *Donald and Rosaline, or the Spectre of the Rocks*; *Agnes of Bavaria, or the Spectre of the Danube*; *The Hall of Death, or Who's the Murderer?* *The Wandering Outlaw*, which concludes with "the death of Oisina, and the appearance of the accusing Spirit;" *The African on the Desert Island*, "including a grand combat, in which the retributive hand of Providence will manifest its abhorrence of vice, and virtue and constancy be eventually triumphant;" *Marmion, or the Spectre Knight*; *The Virgin Bride, or the Spectre of the Tomb*; *The Secret Avengers, or the Hour of Retribution*, and so on. Sometimes his friends of the press would rally him on this point, and state that "during the fair Richardson will produce more real ghosts than Mrs Siddons could ever have personified." He did not, however, take much notice of what they said when he had become old and thick-skinned; but in his younger days he was very ambitious of being noticed by the papers. A certain black sheep practised upon this failing, and used to get money from the showman in consideration of sundry laudatory paragraphs which he represented as having been inserted in various papers through his influence. The demands for money became, however, more frequent than the paragraphs, and Richardson refused to bleed any more. On this the "literary gent" brought him a notice, in which the show was spoken of as a reputable and agreeable place of resort, the writer threatening that, unless "a trifle" were at once forthcoming, he would put *ditto* before the adjectives, and so publish the paragraph. The showman paid the money, but even afterwards exclaimed against "that there specious waggoner as edits *The Times*."

Only on one occasion did Richardson ever enter upon the province of the exhibitor of natural curiosities, and this was in the case of a spotted negro boy, "supposed to be a native of one of the Carribbee Islands." He brought the showman a great deal of money, and was exceedingly much prized by him. Richardson had a portrait of him painted, and engravings were struck therefrom. The portrait now adorns the gallery of Great Mariner Church, and laid by, in the same grave, is the remains of the old showman and his spotted boy.

The performances in the booth went on thirteen or fourteen times a day in rapid succession, and the amount of labour and drudgery the poor actors had to undergo was fearful. Sometimes petty disagreements would arise between the showman and his company, which were very quickly settled before the adjoining Pie-powder Court—a court where justice was administered “on the nail,” so to speak. These differences did not occur often, for the old man, despite his roughness and vulgarity, had a good heart, as many now living could testify if they chose to do so. He always rewarded his performers for extra exertions, and if it was plain that an actor gave satisfaction to the audience, Richardson would at once raise his salary. He was a punctual paymaster, and used to deal out their salaries to the actors on a drum-head at a certain time every Saturday evening. The scene was usually a merry one. The actors would employ that, their most shining hour, in boyish tricks, such as pushing one another against the manager; who, if he could detect the moving spirit, would either pay him last, or, if very much offended, would forget to invite him to the supper which generally wound up the week.

It was a very common thing for the actors from the regular theatres to pay the booth a visit, but Richardson would never take their money, saying, “No, I never takes money from my brother professionals. They can always see my show for nothing and welcome.” An anecdote of this kind is told concerning John Reeve, and a party from the Adelphi, who had come down to the show.

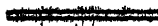
Many ludicrous stories are told of Richardson—generally of such a character as this:—On being asked by a young lady whether there was anything about love in the pieces to be performed, “Oh, yes,” he replied, “all that, miss, for you see the first is *Lovers’ Vows*, and the second un is *Rondyvows*.” He declared that he could not see anything in the exhibition of a man 105 years old, for, said he, “if my grandfather had lived he would have been 120.”

The kind-heartedness of the old showman was notorious. He was a regular subscriber of 50*l.* a year to the Green-Coat School Charity at Camberwell. - At St. Alban’s a fire had occurred, at which he and his company rendered great assistance. A subscription list was afterwards opened for the relief of the sufferers, and among the other donations was an anonymous gift of one hundred pounds. The corporation discovered the donor, and acknowledged the munificent gift as that of Richardson the showman. He afterwards gave two handsome donations to the town of St. Alban’s, one towards the repair of the town-hall, and the other in aid of the funds for renovating the abbey. Another instance of his generosity is worth recording. Some rascally manager had brought a company down to Greenwich to perform between Easter and Whitsuntide, at a time when Richardson was always encamped at that place, as he did not think it worth while to desert the spot at Easter, only to reappear at Whitsuntide. In due time the avaricious manager made off with the treasury, leaving the salaries of the actors in arrear, and the actors themselves in dire distress. Richardson,

knowing of their condition, gave orders at various shops for all that they really needed, and invited several of them to come and dine with him in his "study-room."

In this sumptuous vehicle he always lived, and regulated his domestic economy with the assistance of his cook and man of all work, ~~Smith~~. He had built a cottage in Horsemonger Lane, which cottage was sometimes called his Tusculum, and was well-known to dramatic aspirants as the place where engagements were sometimes to be heard of. His house was handsomely furnished, but he never cared about living there—the Bohemian spirit was too strong in him. In his last illness he would not be removed from the "wan," even at the urgent advice of the doctors; and it was only within two days of his death, when he had given up all hope, and declared he would take no more doctor's stuff, that he allowed himself to be carried to his house. At last the time came when he might have exclaimed with Rabelais, "Let down the curtain," and with Augustus, "The fæce is over:" he died in November, 1836, being then upwards of seventy years old.

Richardson was remarkably temperate, and would tolerate no drunkenness among his company. He left property to the value of upwards of 20,000*l.*, and did not forget those who had contributed to his fortune by their exertions. He left legacies to several of his company, and to two of his musicians 1,000*l.* each. His booth passed into the hands of Messrs. Nelson Lee and Johnson, who used to exhibit a transparency of the old man, in front of the show. Fortune seems, however, to have deserted it on the showman's death. It can now only be seen once a year, we believe, at the Dramatic College-Fête.





Miss Gwir and the Countess

Sumatra.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER X.

MISS GWILT'S DIARY.



JULY 21st, Monday night, eleven o'clock.—He has just left me. We parted by my desire at the path out of the coppice; he going his way to the hotel, and I going mine to my lodgings.

"I have managed to avoid making another appointment with him, by arranging to write to him to-morrow morning. This gives me the night's interval to compose myself, and to coax my mind back (if I can) to my own affairs. I say, 'if I can,' for I feel as if his story had taken possession of me, never to leave me again. Will the night pass, and the morning find me still thinking of the Letter that came to him from his father's deathbed? of the night he watched through, on the Wrecked Ship; and, more

than all, of the first breathless moment when he told me his real Name?

"Would it help me to shake off these impressions, I wonder, if I made the effort of writing them down? There would be no danger, in that case, of my forgetting anything important. And perhaps, after all, it may be the fear of forgetting something which I ought to remember that keeps this story of Midwinter's weighing as it does on my mind. At any rate, the experiment is worth trying. In my present situation I must be free to think of other things, or I shall never find my way through all the difficulties at Thorpe-Ambrose that are still to come.

"Let me think. What haunts me, to begin with?

"The Names haunt me. I keep saying and saying to myself: Both alike!—Christian name and surname, both alike! A light-haired Allan Armadale, whom I have long since known of, and who is the son of my old mistress. A dark-haired Allan Armadale, whom I only know of now, and who is only known to others under the name of Ozias Midwinter. Stranger still; it is not relationship, it is not chance, that has made them namesakes. The father of the light Armadale was the man who was *born* to the family name, and who lost the family inheritance. The father of the dark Armadale was the man who *took* the name, on condition of getting the inheritance—and who got it.

"So there are two of them—I can't help thinking of it—both unmarried. The light-haired Armadale, who offers to the woman who can secure him, eight thousand a year while he lives, who leaves her twelve hundred a year when he dies; who must and shall marry me for those two golden reasons; and whom I hate and loathe as I never hated and loathed a man yet. And the dark-haired Armadale, who has a poor little income which might perhaps pay his wife's milliner, if his wife was careful; who has just left me, persuaded that I mean to marry him; and whom—well, whom I *might* have loved once, before I was the woman I am now.

"And Allan the Fair doesn't know he has a namesake. And Allan the Dark has kept the secret from everybody but the Somersetshire clergyman (whose discretion he can depend on), and myself.

"And there are two Allan Armadales—two Allan Armadales—two Allan Armadales. There! three is a lucky number. Haunt me again, after that, if you can!

"What next? The murder in the timber-shop? No; the murder is a good reason why the dark Armadale, ~~who~~ ^{who} committed it, should keep his secret from the fair Armadale, whose father was killed; but it doesn't concern *me*. I remember there was a suspicion in Madeira at the time of something wrong. *Was it wrong? Was the man who had been tricked out of his wife, to blame for shutting the cabin-door, and leaving the man who had tricked him, to drown in the wreck? Yes, —the woman wasn't worth it.*

"What am I sure of that really concerns myself?

"I am sure of one very important thing. I am sure that Midwinter—I must call him by his ugly false name, or I may confuse the two Armadales before I have done—I am sure that Midwinter is perfectly ignorant that I and the little imp of twelve years old who waited on Mrs. Armadale in Madeira, and copied the letters that were supposed to arrive from the West Indies, are one and the same. There are not many girls of twelve who could have imitated a man's handwriting, and held their tongues about it afterwards, as I did—but that doesn't matter now. What does matter, is, that Midwinter's belief in the Dream is Midwinter's only reason for trying to connect me with Allan Armadale, by associating me with Allan Armadale's father and mother. I ~~shall~~ ^{shall} him

if he actually thought me old enough to have known either of them. And he said No, poor fellow, in the most innocent bewildered way. Would he say No, if he saw me now? Shall I turn to the glass and see if I look my five-and-thirty years? or shall I go on writing? I will go on writing.

"There is one thing more that haunts me almost as obstinately as the Names.

"I wonder whether I am right in relying on Midwinter's superstition (as I do) to help me in keeping him at arm's length. After having let the excitement of the moment hurry me into saying more than I need have said, he is certain to press me; he is certain to come back, with a man's hateful selfishness and impatience in such things, to the question of marrying me. Will the Dream help me to check him? After alternately believing and disbelieving in it, he has got, by his own confession, to believing in it again. Can I say I believe in it, too? I have better reasons for doing so than he knows of. I am not only the person who helped Mrs. Armadale's marriage by helping her to impose on her own father,—I am the woman who tried to drown herself; the woman who started the series of accidents which put young Armadale in possession of his fortune; the woman who has come to Thorpe-Ambrose to marry him for his fortune now he has got it; and more extraordinary still, the woman who stood in the Shadow's place at the pool! These may be coincidences, but they are strange coincidences. I declare I begin to fancy that *I* believe in the Dream too!

"Suppose I say to him, 'I think as you think. I say, what you said in your letter to me, Let us part before the harm is done. Leave me before the third Vision of the Dream comes true.' Leave me; and put the mountains and the seas between you and the man who bears your name!

"Suppose, on the other side, that his love for me makes him reckless of everything else? Suppose he says those desperate words again, which I understand now:—'*What is to be, will be.* What have I to do with it, and what has she?' Suppose—suppose—

"I won't write any more. I hate writing! It doesn't relieve me—it makes me worse. I'm farther from being able to think of all that I *must* think of, than I was when I sat down. It is past midnight. To-morrow has come already—and here I am as helpless as the stupidest woman living! Bed is the only fit place for me.

"Bed? If it was ten years since, instead of to-day; and if I had married Midwinter for love, I might be going to bed now with nothing heavier on my mind than a visit on tiptoe to the nursery, and a last look at night to see if my children were sleeping quietly in their crib. I wonder whether I should have loved my children if I had ever had any? Perhaps, yes—perhaps, no. It doesn't matter.

"Tuesday morning, ten o'clock.—Who was the man who invited

laudatum? I thank him from the bottom of my heart, whoever he was. If all the miserable wretches in pain of body and mind, whose comforter he has been, could meet together to sing his praises, what a chorus it would be! I have had six delicious hours of oblivion; I have woken up with my mind composed; I have written a perfect little letter to Midwinter; I have drunk my nice cup of tea, with a real relish of it; I have dawdled over my morning toilet with an exquisite sense of relief—and all through the modest little bottle of Drops which I see on my bedroom chimney-piece at this moment. ‘Drops,’ you are a darling! If I love nothing else, I love you.

“My letter to Midwinter has been sent through the post; and I have told him to reply to me in the same manner.

“I feel no anxiety about his answer—he can only answer in one way. I have asked for a little time to consider, because my family circumstances require some consideration, in his interests as well as in mine. I have engaged to tell him what those circumstances are (what shall I say, I wonder?) when we next meet; and I have requested him in the meantime to keep all that has passed between us a secret for the present. As to what he is to do himself in the interval while I am supposed to be considering, I have left it to his own discretion—merely reminding him that, in our present situation, his remaining at Thorpe-Ambrose might lead to inquiry into his motives, and that his attempting to see me again (while our positions towards each other cannot be openly avowed) might injure my reputation. I have offered to write to him if he wishes it; and I have ended by promising to make the interval of our necessary separation as short as I can.

“This sort of plain unaffected letter—which I might have written to him last night, if his story had not been running in my head as it did—has one defect, I know. It certainly keeps him out of the way, while I am casting my net, and catching my gold fish at the great house for the second time—but it also leaves an awkward day of reckoning to come with Midwinter if I succeed. How am I to manage him? What am I to do? I ought to face those two questions as boldly as usual—but somehow my courage seems to fail me; and I don’t quite fancy meeting *that* difficulty, till the time comes when it *must* be met. Shall I confess to my diary that I am sorry for Midwinter, and that I shrink a little from thinking of the day when he hears that I am going to be mistress at the great house?

“But I am not mistress yet—and I can’t take a step in the direction of the great house till I have got the answer to my letter, and till I know that Midwinter is out of the way. Patience! patience! I must go and forget myself at my piano. There is the ‘Moonlight Sonata’ open, and tempting me, on the music-stand. Have I nerve enough to play it, I wonder? Or will it set me shuddering with the mystery and terror of it, as it did the other day?

"*Five o'clock.*—I have got his answer. The slightest request I can make is a command to him. He has gone—and he sends me his address in London. 'There are two considerations,' (he says,) 'which help to reconcile me to leaving you. The first is, that you wish it, and that it is only to be for a little while. The second is, that I think I can make some arrangements in London for adding to my income by my own labour. I have never cared for money for myself—but you don't know how I am beginning already to prize the luxuries and refinements that money can provide, for my wife's sake.' Poor fellow! I almost wish I had not written to him as I did; I almost wish I had not sent him away from me.

"Fancy, if Mother Oldershaw saw this page in my diary! I have had a letter from her this morning—a letter to remind me of my obligations, and to tell me she suspects things are all going wrong. Let her suspect! I shan't trouble myself to answer—I can't be worried with that old wretch in the state I am in now.

"It is a lovely afternoon—I want a walk—I mustn't think of Midwinter. Suppose I put on my bonnet, and try my experiment at once at the great house? Everything is in my favour. There is no spy to follow me, and no lawyer to keep me out, this time. Am I handsome enough, to-day? Well, yes—handsome enough to be a match for a little dowdy, awkward, fleckled creature, who ought to be perched on a form at school, and strapped to a back-board to straighten her crooked shoulders.

"The nursery lips opt in all they utter;
Besides, they always smell of bread and butter."

"How admirably Byron has described girls in their teens!

"*Eight o'clock.*—I have just got back from Armadale's house. I have seen him, and spoken to him; and the end of it may be set down in three plain words. I have failed. There is no more chance of my being Mrs. Armadale of Thorpe-Ambrose than there is of my being Queen of England.

"Shall I write and tell Oldershaw? Shall I go back to London? Not till I have had time to think a little. Not just yet.

"Let me think; I have failed completely—failed, with all the circumstances in favour of success. I caught him alone on the drive in front of the house. He was excessively disconcerted, but at the same time quite willing to hear me. I tried him, first quietly—then with tears, and the rest of it. I introduced myself in the character of the poor innocent woman whom he had been the means of injuring. I confused, I interested, I convinced him. I went on to the purely Christian part of my errand, and spoke with such feeling of his separation from his friend, for which I was innocently responsible, that I turned his odious rosy face quite pale, and made him beg me at last not to distress him. But, whatever other feelings I roused in him, I never once roused his old feeling for me. I saw it in

his eyes when he looked at me; I felt it in his fingers when we shook hands. We parted friends and nothing more.

"It is for this, is it, Miss Milroy, that I resisted temptation, morning after morning, when I knew you were out alone in the park? I have just left you time to slip in, and take my place in Armadale's good graces, have I? I never resisted temptation yet without suffering for it in some such way as this! If I had only followed my first thoughts, on the day when I took leave of you, my young lady—well, well, never mind that now. I have got the future before me; you are not Mrs. Armadale yet! And I can tell you one other thing—whoever else he marries, he will never marry *you*. If I am even with you in no other way, trust me, whatever comes of it, to be even with you there!

"I am not, to my own surprise, in one of my furious passions. The last time I was in this perfectly cool state, under serious provocation, something came of it, which I daren't write down, even in my own private diary. I shouldn't be surprised if something comes of it now.

"On my way back, I called at Mr. Bashwood's lodgings in the town. He was not at home, and I left a message telling him to come here to-night and speak to me. I mean to relieve him at once of the duty of looking after Armadale and Miss Milroy. I may not see my way yet to ruining her prospects at Thorpe-Ambrose as completely as she has ruined mine. But when the time comes, and I do see it, I don't know to what lengths my sense of injury may take me; and there may be inconvenience, and possibly danger, in having such a chicken-hearted creature as Mr. Bashwood in my confidence.

"I suspect I am more upset by all this than I supposed. Midwinter's story is beginning to haunt me again, without rhyme or reason.

"A soft, quick, trembling knock at the street door! I know who it is. No hand but old Bashwood's could knock in that way.

"*Nine o'clock.*—I have just got rid of him. He has surprised me by coming out in a new character.

"It seems (though I didn't detect him) that he was at the great house while I was in company with Armadale. He saw us talking on the drive; and he afterwards heard what the servants said, who saw us too. The wise opinion below stairs is that we have 'made it up,' and that the master is likely to marry me after all. 'He's sweet on her red hair,' was the elegant expression they used in the kitchen. 'Little Miss can't match her there—and little Miss will get the worst of it.' How I hate the coarse ways of the lower orders!

"While old Bashwood was telling me this, I thought he looked even more confused and nervous than usual. But I failed to see what was really the matter until after I had told him that he was to leave Mr. Bashwood's observation of Mrs. Armadale and Miss Milroy to me. Every step of the time that there is in the whole old creature's body seemed to stop for him the time. His manner quite an overpowering effort; he really seemed to it

he would drop down dead of fright at his own boldness; but he forced out the question, for all that, stammering, and stuttering, and kneading desperately with both hands at the brim of his hideous great hat. 'I beg your pardon, Miss Gwi-Gwi-Gwilt! You are not really go go-going-to marry Mr. Armadale, are you?' Jealous—if ever I saw it in a man's face yet, I saw it in his—actually jealous of Armadale, at his age! If I had been in the humour for it, I should have burst out laughing in his face. As it was, I was angry, and lost all patience with him. I told him he was an old fool, and ordered him to go on quietly with his usual business until I sent him word that he was wanted again. He submitted as usual; but there was an indescribable something in his watery old eyes, when he took leave of me, which I have never noticed in them before. Love has the credit of working all sorts of strange transformations. Can it be really possible that Love has made Mr. Bashwood man enough to be angry with me?

"Wednesday.—My experience of Miss Milroy's habits suggested a suspicion to me last night, which I thought it desirable to clear up this morning.

"It was always her way, when I was at the cottage, to take a walk early in the morning before breakfast. Considering that I used often to choose that very time for my private meetings with Armadale, it struck me as likely that my former pupil might be taking a leaf out of my book, and that I might make some desirable discoveries if I turned my steps in the direction of the major's garden at the right hour. I deprived myself of my Drops, to make sure of waking; passed a miserable night in consequence; and was ready enough to get up at six o'clock, and walk the distance from my lodgings to the cottage in the fresh morning air.

"I had not been five minutes on the park-side of the garden enclosure before I saw her come out. She seemed to have had a bad night too; her eyes were heavy and red, and her lips and cheeks looked swollen as if she had been crying. There was something on her mind, evidently; something, as it soon appeared, to take her out of the garden into the park. She walked (if one can call it walking, with such legs as hers!) straight to the summer-house, and opened the door, and crossed the bridge, and went on quicker and quicker towards the low ground in the park, where the trees are thickest. I followed her over the open space with perfect impunity, in the preoccupied state she was in; and when she began to slacken her pace among the trees, I was among the trees too, and was not afraid of her seeing me.

"Before long, there was a crackling and trampling of heavy feet coming up towards us through the underwood in a deep dip of the ground. I knew that step as well as she knew it. 'Here I am,' she said, in a faint little voice. I kept behind the trees a few yards off, in some doubt on which side Armadale would come out of the underwood, to join her. He came out, up the side of the dell opposite to the tree behind which I was
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in their situation had made runaway marriages before now, and fathers and mothers who wouldn't forgive them before, had forgiven them afterwards. Such outrageously straightforward love-making as this, left Miss Milroy, of course, but two alternatives—to confess that she had been saying No, when she meant Yes, or to take refuge in another explosion. She was hypocrite enough to prefer another explosion. 'How dare you, Mr. Armadale? Go away directly! It's inconsiderate, it's heartless, it's perfectly disgraceful to say such things to me!' and so on, and so on. It seems incredible, but it is not the less true, that he was positively fool enough to take her at her word. He begged her pardon, and went away like a child that is put in the corner—the most contemptible object in the form of man that eyes ever looked on!

"She waited, after he had gone, to compose herself, and I waited behind the trees to see how she would succeed. Her eyes wandered round slyly to the path by which he had left her. She smiled (grinned would be the truer way of putting it, with such a mouth as hers); took a few steps on tiptoe to look after him; turned back again, and suddenly burst into a violent fit of crying. I am not quite so easily taken in as Armadale, and I saw what it all meant plainly enough.

"'To-morrow,' I thought to myself, 'you will be in the park again, miss, by pure accident. The next day, you will lead him on into proposing to you for the second time. The day after, he will venture back to the subject of runaway marriages, and you will only be becomingly confused. And the day after that, if he has got a plan to propose, and if your clothes are ready to be packed for school, you will listen to him.' Yes, yes; Time is always on the man's side, where a woman is concerned, if the man is only patient enough to let Time help him.

"I let her leave the place and go back to the cottage, quite unconscious that I had been looking at her. I waited among the trees thinking. The truth is, I was impressed by what I had heard and seen, in a manner that it is not very easy to describe. It put the whole thing before me in a new light. It showed me—what I had never even suspected till this morning—that she is really fond of him.

"Heavy as my debt of obligation is to her, there is no fear now, of my failing to pay it to the last farthing. It would have been no small triumph for me to stand between Miss Milroy and her ambition to be one of the leading ladies of the county. But it is infinitely more, where her first love is concerned, to stand between Miss Milroy and her heart's desire. Shall I remember my own youth and spare her? No! She has deprived me of the one chance I had of breaking the chain that binds me to a past life, and horrible to be thought of. I am thrown back into a position, compared to which the position of an outcast who walks the streets is endurable and enviable. No, Miss Milroy—no, Mr. Armadale; I will spare neither of you.

"I have been back some hours. I have been thinking, and nothing has come of it. Ever since I got that strange letter of Miss Milroy's, I

Sunday, my usual readiness in emergencies has deserted me. When I am not thinking of him or of his story, my mind feels quite stupefied. I who have always known what to do on other occasions, don't know what to do now. It would be easy enough, of course, to warn Major Milroy of his daughter's proceedings. But the major is fond of his daughter; Armadale is anxious to be reconciled with him; Armadale is rich and prosperous, and ready to submit to the elder man—and sooner or later they will be friends again, and the marriage will follow. Warning Major Milroy is only the way to embarrass them for the present; it is not the way to part them for good and all.

"What is the way? I can't see it. I could tear my own hair off my head! I could burn the house down! If there was a train of gunpowder under the whole world, I could light it, and blow the whole world to destruction—I am in such a rage, such a frenzy with myself for not seeing it!

"Poor dear Midwinter! Yes, 'dear.' I don't care. I'm lonely and helpless. I want somebody who is gentle and loving, to make much of me; I wish I had his head on my bosom again; I have a good mind to go to London, and marry him. Am I mad? Yes; all people who are as miserable as I am, are mad. I must go to the window and get some air. Shall I jump out? No; it disfigures one too, and the coroner's inquest lets so many people see it.

"The air has revived me. I begin to remember that I have Time on my side, at any rate. Nobody knows but me, of their secret meetings in the park the first thing in the morning. If jealous old Bashwood, who is slinking and sly enough for anything, tries to look privately after Armadale, in his own interests, he will try at the usual time when he goes to the steward's office. He knows nothing of Miss Milroy's early habits; and he won't be on the spot till Armadale has got back to the house. For another week to come, I may wait and watch them, and choose my own time and way of interfering the moment I see a chance of his getting the better of her hesitation, and making her say, Yes.

"So here I wait, without knowing how things will end with Midwinter in London; with my purse getting emptier and emptier, and no appearance so far of any new pupils to fill it; with Mother Oldershaw certain to insist on having her money back the moment she knows I have failed; without prospects, friends, or hopes of any kind—a lost woman, if ever there was a lost woman yet. Well! I say it again and again and again—I don't care! Here I stop, if I sell the clothes off my back, if I hire myself at the public-house to play to the brutes in the tap-room; here I stop till the time comes, and I see the way to parting Armadale and Miss Milroy for ever!

"Seven o'clock.—Any sign that the time is coming yet? I hardly know—there are signs of a change, at any rate, in my position at the

"Two of the oldest and ugliest of the many old and ugly ladies who took up my case when I left Major Milroy's service, have just called, announcing themselves with the insufferable impudence of charitable Englishwomen, as a deputation from my patronesses. It seems, that the news of my reconciliation with Armadale has spread from the servants' offices at the great house, and has reached the town, with this result. It is the unanimous opinion of my 'patronesses' (and the opinion of Major Milroy also, who has been consulted,) that I have acted with the most inexcusable imprudence in going to Armadale's house, and in there speaking on friendly terms with a man whose conduct towards myself has made his name a by-word in the neighbourhood. My total want of self-respect in this matter, has given rise to a report that I am trading as cleverly as ever on my good looks, and that I am as likely as not to end in making Armadale marry me after all. My 'patronesses' are of course too charitable to believe this. They merely feel it necessary to remonstrate with me in a Christian spirit, and to warn me that any second and similar imprudence on my part would force all my best friends in the place to withdraw the countenance and protection which I now enjoy.

"Having addressed me, turn and turn about, in these terms (evidently all rehearsed beforehand), my two Gorgon-visitors straightened themselves in their chairs, and looked at me as much as to say, 'You may often have heard of Virtue, Miss Gwilt, but we don't believe you ever really saw it in full bloom till we came and called on you.'

"Seeing they were bent on provoking me, I kept my temper, and answered them in my smoothest, sweetest, and most ladylike manner. I have noticed that the Christianity of a certain class of respectable people begins when they open their prayer-books at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, and ends when they shut them up again at one o'clock on Sunday afternoon. Nothing so astonishes and insults Christians of this sort as reminding them of their Christianity on a week-day. On this hint, as the man says in the play, I spoke.

"'What have I done that is wrong?' I asked, innocently. 'Mr. Armadale has injured me; and I have been to his house and forgiven him the injury. Surely there must be some mistake, ladies? You can't have really come here to remonstrate with me in a Christian spirit for performing an act of Christianity?'

"The two Gorgons got up. I firmly believe some women have cats' tails as well as cats' faces. I firmly believe the tails of those two particular cats wagged slowly under their petticoats, and swelled to four times their proper size.

"'Temper' we were prepared for, Miss Gwilt,' they said, 'but not Profanity. We wish you good evening.'

"So they left me, and so 'Miss Gwilt' sinks out of the patronising notice of the neighbourhood.

"I wonder what will come of this trumpery little quarrel? One thing will come of it which I can see already. The report will spread

Miss Milroy's ears. She will insist on Armadale's justifying himself—and Armadale will end in satisfying her of his innocence by making another proposal. This will be quite likely to hasten matters between them—at least it would with me. If I was in her place, I should say to myself, 'I will make sure of him while I can.' Supposing it doesn't rain to-morrow morning, I think I will take another early walk in the direction of the park.

"*Midnight.*—As I can't take my drops, with a morning walk before me, I may as well give up all hope of sleeping, and go on with my diary. Even *with* my drops, I doubt if my head would be very quiet on my pillow to-night. Since the little excitement of the scene with my 'lady-patronesses' has worn off, I have been troubled with misgivings which would leave me but a poor chance, under any circumstances, of getting much rest.

"I can't imagine why, but the parting words spoken to Armadale by that old brute of a lawyer, have come back to my mind! Here they are, as reported in Mr. Bashwood's letter:—'Some other person's curiosity may go on from the point where you (and I) have stopped, and some other person's hand may let the broad daylight in yet on Miss Gwilt.'

"What does he mean by that? And what did he mean afterwards when he overtook old Bashwood in the drive, by telling him to gratify his curiosity? Does this hateful Pedgift actually suppose there is any chance——? Ridiculous! Why, I have only to *look* at the feeble old creature, and he daren't lift his little finger unless I tell him. *He* try to pry into my past life indeed! Why, people with ten times his brains, and a hundred times his courage, have tried—and have left off as wise as they began.

"I don't know *though*—it might have been better if I had kept my temper when Bashwood was here the other night. And it might be better still if I saw him to-morrow, and took him back into my good graces by giving him something to do for me. Suppose I tell him to look after the two Pedgifts, and to discover whether there is any chance of their attempting to renew their connection with Armadale? No such thing is at all likely—but if I gave old Bashwood this commission, it would flatter his sense of his own importance to me, and would at the same time serve the excellent purpose of keeping him out of my way.

"*Thursday morning, nine o'clock.*—I have just got back from the park.

"Not once, I have proved a true prophet. There they were together, at the same early hour, in the same secluded situation among the pines; and there was Miss in full possession of the report of my visit to the great house, and taking her tone accordingly.

"*And saying one or two things about me, which, I perceive, did me no harm; Armadale took the way to convince her of his innocence, which*

I felt beforehand he would be driven to take. He repeated his proposal of marriage, with excellent effect this time. Tears and kisses and protestations followed; and my late pupil opened her heart at last, in the most innocent manner. Home, she confessed, was getting so miserable to her now, that it was only less miserable than going to school. Her mother's temper was becoming more violent and unmanageable every day. The nurse, who was the only person with any influence over her, had gone away in disgust. Her father was becoming more and more immersed in his clock, and was made more and more resolute to send her away from home, by the distressing scenes which now took place with her mother, almost day by day. I waited through these domestic disclosures on the chance of hearing any plans they might have for the future discussed between them; and my patience, after no small exercise of it, was rewarded at last.

"The first suggestion (as was only natural where such a fool as Armadale was concerned) came from the girl. She started an idea, which I own I had not anticipated. She proposed that Armadale should write to her father; and, cleverer still, she prevented all fear of his blundering by telling him what he was to say. He was to express himself as deeply distressed at his estrangement from the major, and to request permission to call at the cottage, and say a few words in his own justification. That was all. The letter was not to be sent that day, for the applicants for the vacant place of Mrs. Milroy's nurse were coming, and seeing them and questioning them would put her father, with his dislike of such things, in no humour to receive Armadale's application indulgently. The Friday would be the day to send the letter, and on the Saturday morning, if the answer was unfortunately not favourable, they might meet again. 'I don't like deceiving my father; he has always been so kind to me. And there will be no need to deceive him, Allan, if we can only make my friends again. Those were the last words the little hypocrite said, when I left them.

"What will the major do? Saturday morning will show. I won't think of it till Saturday morning has come and gone. They are not man and wife yet; and again and again I say it, though my brains are still as helpless as ever, man and wife they shall never be.

"On my way home again, I caught Bashwood at his breakfast, with his poor old black teapot, and his little penny loaf, and his one cheap morsel of oily butter, and his darned dirty table-cloth. It sickens me to think of it.

"I coaxed and comforted the miserable old creature till the tears stood in his eyes, and he quite blushed with pleasure. He undertakes to look after the Pedgifts with the utmost alacrity. Pedgift the elder, he describes, when once roused, as the most obstinate man living; nothing will induce him to give way, unless Armadale gives way also on his side. Pedgift the younger is much the more likely of the two to make attempts at a reconciliation. Such at least is Bashwood's opinion. It is of very little consequence now what happens either way. The only important thing is to see my gliding villain safely again to my apron-string. And this is done.

"The post is late this morning. It has only just come in, and has brought me a letter from Midwinter.

"It is a charming letter; it flatters me and flutters me as if I was a young girl again. No reproaches for my never having written to him; no hateful hurrying of me, in plain words, to marry him. He only writes to tell me a piece of news. He has obtained, through his lawyers, a prospect of being employed as occasional correspondent to a newspaper which is about to be started in London. The employment will require him to leave England for the Continent, which would exactly meet his own wishes for the future, but he cannot consider the proposal seriously until he has first ascertained whether it would meet my wishes too. He knows no will but mine, and he leaves me to decide, after first mentioning the time allowed him before his answer must be sent in. It is the time of course (if I agree to his going abroad) in which I must marry him. But there is not a word about this in his letter. He asks for nothing but a sight of my handwriting to help him through the interval, while we are separated from each other.

"That is the letter; not very long, but so prettily expressed.

"I think I can penetrate the secret of his fancy for going abroad. That wild idea of putting the mountains and the seas between Armadale and himself is still in his mind. As if either he or I could escape doing what we are fated to do—supposing we really are fated—by putting a few hundred, or a few thousand miles, between Armadale and ourselves! What strange absurdity and inconsistency! And yet how I like him for being absurd and inconsistent; for don't I see plainly that I am at the bottom of it all? Who leads this clever man astray in spite of himself? Who makes him too blind to see the contradiction in his own conduct, which he would see plainly in the conduct of another person? How interested I do feel in him! How dangerously near I am to shutting my eyes on the past, and letting myself love him! Was Eve fonder of Adam than ever, I wonder, after she had coaxed him into eating the apple? I should have quite doted on him if I had been in her place. (Memorandum:—To write Midwinter a charming little letter on my side, with a kiss in it; and as time is allowed him before he sends in his answer, to ask for time too, before I tell him whether I will or will not go abroad.)

"Five o'clock.—A tiresome visit from my landlady; eager for a little gossip, and full of news, which she thinks will interest me.

"She is acquainted, I find, with Mrs. Milroy's late nurse; and she has been seeing her friend off, at the station, this afternoon." They talked of course of affairs at the cottage, and my name turned up in the course of conversation. I am quite wrong, it seems, if the nurse's authority is to be trusted, in believing Miss Milroy to be responsible for sending Mr. Armadale to my residence in London. Miss Milroy, I now know, knows nothing about it, and it all originated in her mother's and

of me. The present wretched state of things at the cottage is due entirely to the same cause. Mrs. Milroy is firmly persuaded that my remaining at Thorpe-Ambrose is referable to my having some private means of communicating with the major which it is impossible for her to discover. With this conviction in her mind, she has become so unmanageable that no person, with any chance of bettering herself, could possibly remain in attendance on her; and, sooner or later, the major, object to it as he may, will be obliged to place her under proper medical care.

"That is the sum and substance of what the wearisome landlady had to tell me. Unnecessary to say that I was not in the least interested by it. Even if the nurse's assertion is to be depended on—which I persist in doubting—it is of no importance now. I know that Miss Milroy, and nobody but Miss Milroy, has utterly ruined my prospect of becoming Mrs. Armadale of Thorpe-Ambrose—and I care to know nothing more. If her mother was really alone in the attempt to expose my false reference, her mother seems to be suffering for it, at any rate. And so good-bye to Mrs. Milroy—and heaven defend me from any more last glimpses at the cottage, seen through the medium of my landlady's spectacles!

"*Nine o'clock.*—Bashwood has just left me, having come with news from the great house. Pedgift the younger has made his attempt at bringing about a reconciliation this very day, and has failed. I am the sole cause of the failure. Armadale is quite willing to be reconciled, if Pedgift the elder will avoid all future occasion of disagreement between them, by never recurring to the subject of Miss Gwilt. This, however, happens to be exactly the condition which Pedgift's father—with his opinion of me and my doings—would consider it his duty to Armadale not to accept. So lawyer and client remain as far apart as ever, and the obstacle of the Pedgifts is cleared out of my way.

"It might have been a very awkward obstacle, so far as Pedgift the elder is concerned, if one of his suggestions had been carried out—I mean, if an officer of the London police had been brought down here to look at me. It is a question, even now, whether I had better not take to the thick veil again, which I always wear in London and other large places. The only difficulty is, that it would excite remark in this inquisitive little town to see me wearing a thick veil, for the first time, in the summer weather.

"It is close on ten o'clock—I have been dawdling over my diary longer than I supposed. No words can describe how weary and languid I feel. Why don't I take my sleeping drops and go to bed? There is no meeting between Armadale and Miss Milroy to force me into early rising to-morrow morning. Am I trying, for the hundredth time, to see my way clearly into the future—trying, in my present state of fatigue, to be the quick-witted woman I once was, before all these anxieties came together and overpowered me? or am I perversely afraid of my bed when I want to shut? I don't know—I am tired and miserable; I am looking awfully

haggard and old. With a little encouragement, I might be fool enough to burst out crying. Luckily, there is no one to encourage me. What sort of night is it, I wonder?

"A cloudy night, with the moon showing at intervals, and the wind rising. I can just hear it moaning among the ins and outs of the unfinished cottages at the end of the street. My nerves must be a little shaken, I think. I was startled just now by a shadow on the wall. It was only after a moment or two that I mustered sense enough to notice where the candle was, and to see that the shadow was my own.

"Shadows remind me of Midwinter—or, if the shadows don't, something else does. I must have another look at his letter, and then I will positively go to bed.

"I shall end in getting fond of him. If I remain much longer in this lonely uncertain state—so irresolute, so unlike my usual self—I shall end in getting fond of him. What madness! As if I could ever be really fond of a man again!

"Suppose I took one of my sudden resolutions, and married him. Poor as he is, he would give me a name and a position, if I became his wife. Let me see how the name—his own name—would look, if I really did consent to take it for mine.

"'Mrs. Armadale!' Pretty.

"'Mrs. Allan Armadale!' Prettier still.

"My nerves must be shaken. Here is my own handwriting startling me now! It is so strange—it is enough to startle anybody. The similarity in the two names never struck me in this light before. Marry which of the two I might, my name would of course be the same. I should have been Mrs. Armadale, if I had married the light-haired Allan at the great house. And I can be Mrs. Armadale still, if I marry the dark-haired Allan in London. It's almost maddening to write it down—to feel that something ought to come of it—and to find nothing come.

"How can anything come of it? If I did go to London, and marry him (as of course I must marry him) under his real name, would he let me be known by it afterwards? With all his reasons for concealing his real name, he would insist—no, he is too fond of me to do that—he would entreat me to take the name which he has assumed. Mrs. Midwinter. Hideous! Oslas, too, when I wanted to address him familiarly as his wife should. Worse than hideous!

"And yet, there would be some reason for humouring him in this, if he asked me. Suppose the brutes at the great house happened to leave this neighbourhood as a single man; and suppose, in his absence, any of the people who knew him heard of a Mrs. Allan Armadale, they would set her down at once as his wife. Even if they actually saw me—if I actually came among them with that name, and if he was represented as pretending to be his own servant would be the first to say, 'We have seen the woman marry him, after all!' And my lady patroness, who will be

ready to believe anything of me now we have quarrelled, would join the chorus *setto voce* :—'Only think, my dear, the report that so shocked me, actually turns out to be true!' No. If I marry Midwinter, I must either be perpetually putting my husband and myself in a false position—or I must leave his real name, his pretty, romantic name, behind me at the church door.

"My husband! As if I was really going to marry him! I am not going to marry him, and there's an end of it."

"*Half-past ten*.—Oh dear! oh dear! how my temples throb, and how hot my weary eyes feel! There is the moon looking at me through the window. How fast the little scattered clouds are flying before the wind! Now they let the moon in; and now they shut the moon out. What strange shapes the patches of yellow light take, and lose again, all in a moment! No peace and quiet for me, look where I may. The candle keeps flickering, and the very sky itself is restless to-night.

"'To bed! to bed!' as Lady Macbeth says. I wonder by-the-by what Lady Macbeth would have done in my position? She would have killed somebody when her difficulties first began. Probably Armadale.

"*Friday morning*.—A night's rest, thanks again to my Drops. I went to breakfast in better spirits, and received a morning welcome in the shape of a letter from Mrs. Oldershaw.

"My silence has produced its effect on Mother Jezebel. She attributes it to the right cause, and she shows her claws at last. If I am not in a position to pay my note-of-hand for thirty pounds, which is due on Tuesday next, her lawyer is instructed to 'take the usual course.' If I am not in a position to pay it! Why, when I have settled to-day with my landlord, I shall have barely five pounds left! There is not the shadow of a prospect between now and Tuesday of my earning any money; and I don't possess a friend in this place who would trust me with sixpence. The difficulties that are swarming round me wanted but one more to complete them, and that one has come.

"Midwinter would assist me, of course, if I could bring myself to ask him for assistance. But that means marrying him. Am I really desperate enough and helpless enough to end it in that way? No; not yet.

"My head feels heavy; I must get out into the fresh air, and think about it.

"*Two o'clock*.—I believe I have caught the infection of Midwinter's superstition. I begin to think that events are forcing me nearer and nearer to some end which I don't see yet, but which I am firmly persuaded is now not far off.

"I have been insulted—deliberately insulted before witnesses—by John Wilkey.

"After walking, as usual, in the most unfrequented place I could pick out; and after trying not very successfully to think to some good purpose

of what I am to do next, I remembered that I needed some note-paper and pens, and went back to the town, to the stationer's shop. It might have been wiser to have sent for what I wanted. But I was weary of myself, and weary of my lonely rooms; and I did my own errand, for no better reason than that it was something to do.

"I had just got into the shop, and was asking for what I wanted, when another customer came in. We both looked up, and recognized each other at the same moment: Miss Milroy.

"A woman and a lad were behind the counter, besides the man who was serving me. The woman civilly addressed the new customer. 'What can we have the pleasure of doing for you, Miss?' After pointing it first, by looking me straight in the face, she answered, 'Nothing, thank you, at present. I'll come back when the shop is empty.'

"She went out. The three people in the shop looked at me in silence. In silence, on my side, I paid for my purchases, and left the place. I don't know how I might have felt if I had been in my usual spirits. In the anxious unsettled state I am in now, I can't deny it, the girl stung me.

"In the weakness of the moment (for it was nothing else) I was on the point of matching her petty spitefulness by spitefulness quite as petty on my side. I had actually got as far as the whole length of the street, on my way to the major's cottage, bent on telling him the secret of his daughter's morning walks, before my better sense came back to me. When I did cool down, I turned round at once, and took the way home. No, no, Miss Milroy: mere temporary mischief-making at the cottage, which would only end in your father forgiving you, and in Armadale profiting by his indulgence, will nothing like pay the debt I owe you. I don't forget that your heart is set on Armadale; and that the major, however he may talk, has always ended hitherto in giving you your own way. My head *may* be getting duller and duller, but it has not quite failed me yet.

"In the meantime, there is Mother Oldershaw's letter waiting obstinately to be answered; and here am I, not knowing what to do about it yet. Shall I answer it or not? It doesn't matter for the present; there are some hours still to spare before the post goes out.

"Suppose I asked Armadale to lend me the money? I should enjoy getting something out of him; and I believe, in his present situation with Miss Milroy, he would do anything to be rid of me. Mean enough this, on my part. Pooh! When you hate and despise a man, as I hate and despise Armadale, who cares for looking mean in his eyes?

"And yet my pride—or my something else, I don't know what—shrinks from it.

"Half-past two—only half-past two. Oh, the dreadful weariness of these long summer days! I can't keep thinking and thinking any longer; I must do something to relieve my mind. Can I go to my piano? What! No! No! No! I shall get thinking again, if I touch my notes. And, in my state, would I feel any pleasure in doing so? No! No!

a man, and I can't drink. I'll dawdle over my dresses, and put my things tidy.

"Has an hour passed? More than an hour. It seems like a minute. I can't look back through these leaves, but, I know I wrote the words somewhere. I know I felt myself getting nearer and nearer to some end that was still hidden from me. The end is hidden no longer. The cloud is off my mind, the blindness has gone from my eyes. I see it! I see it!

"It came to me—I never sought it. If I was lying on my deathbed, I could swear, with a safe conscience, I never sought it.

"I was only looking over my things; I was as idly and as frivolously employed as the most idle and most frivolous woman living. I went through my dresses and my linen. What could be more innocent? Children go through their dresses and their linen.

"It was such a long summer day, and I was so tired of myself. I went to my boxes next. I looked over the large box first, which I usually leave open; and then I tried the small box, which I always keep locked.

"From one thing to the other, I came at last to the bundle of letters at the bottom—the letters of the man for whom I once sacrificed and suffered everything; the man who has made me what I am. A hundred times I have determined to burn his letters; but I have never burnt them. This time, all I said was, 'I won't read his letters!' And I did read them.

"The villain—the false, cowardly, heartless villain—what have I to do with his letters now? Oh, the misery of being a woman! Oh, the meanness that our memory of a man can tempt us to, when our love for him is dead and gone! I read the letters—I was so lonely and so miserable, I read the letters.

"I came to the last—the letter he wrote to encourage me, when I hesitated as the terrible time came nearer and nearer; the letter that revived me when my resolution failed at the eleventh hour. I read on, line after line, till I came to these words:—

" 'I really have no patience with such absurdities as you have written to me. You say I am driving you on to do what is beyond a woman's courage. Am I? I might refer you to any collection of Trials, English or foreign, to show that you were utterly wrong. But such collections may be beyond your reach; and I will only refer you to a case in yesterday's newspaper. The circumstances are totally different from our circumstances; but the example of resolution in a woman is an example worth your notice.

"You will find, among the law reports, a married woman charged with seduc-
tiously representing herself to be the missing widow of an officer in the merchant
service, who was supposed to have been drowned. The name of the prisoner's husband
(living), and the name of the officer (a very common one, both as to Christian and
surname), happened to be identically the same. There was money to be got by it
(sorely wanted by the prisoner's husband, to whom she was devotedly attached), if the
story had succeeded. The woman took it all on herself. Her husband was faithful
and all, and the delight was after him. The circumstances, as you may find the
reports, were all in her favour, and were so well managed by her that the jury

themselves acknowledged she might have succeeded, if the supposed drowned man had not turned up alive and well in the nick of time to confront her. The scene took place at the lawyers' office, and came out in the evidence at the police-court. The woman was handsome, and the sailor was a good-natured man. He wanted, at first, if the lawyers would have allowed him, to let her off. He said to her, among other things, 'You didn't count on the drowned man coming back, alive and hearty, did you, ma'am?' 'It's lucky for you,' she said, 'I didn't count on it. You have escaped the sea, but you wouldn't have escaped me.' 'Why, what would you have done, if you had known I was coming back?' says the sailor. She looked him steadily in the face, and answered:—'I would have killed you.' There! Do you think such a woman as that would have written to tell me I was pressing her farther than she had courage to go? A handsome woman, too, like yourself! You would drive some men in my position to wish they had her now in your place.'

"I read no farther. When I had got on, line by line, to those words, it burst on me like a flash of lightning. In an instant I saw it as plainly as I see it now. It is horrible, it is unheard-of, it out-dares all daring; but, if I can only nerve myself to face one terrible necessity, it is to be done. *I may personate the richly-provided widow of Allan Armadale of Thorpe-Ambrose, if I can count on Allan Armadale's death in a given time.*

"There, in plain words, is the frightful temptation under which I now feel myself sinking. It is frightful in more ways than one—for it has come straight out of that other temptation to which I yielded in the bygone time.

"Yes; there the letter has been waiting for me in my box, to serve a purpose never thought of by the villain who wrote it. There is the Case, as he calls it—only quoted to taunt me; utterly unlike my own case at the time—there it has been, waiting and lurking for me through all the changes in my life, till it has come to be like my case at last.

"It might startle any woman to see this, and even this is not the worst. The whole thing has been in my Diary, for days past, without my knowing it! Every idle fancy that escaped me, has been tending secretly that one way! And I never saw, never suspected it, till the reading of the letter put my own thoughts before me in a new light—till I saw the shadow of my own circumstances suddenly reflected in one special circumstance of that other woman's case!

"It is to be done, if I can but look the necessity in the face. It is to be done, *if I can count on Allan Armadale's death in a given time.*

"All but his death is easy. The whole series of events under which I have been blindly chasing and fretting for more than a week past, have been one and all—though I was too stupid to see it—events in my favour, events giving the way smoothly and more smoothly straight to the end.

"First, three bold steps—only three!—that end might be reached. Let Edwina marry me privately, under his real name—stop the first! Let Armadale leave Thorpe-Ambrose a single man, and die in some distant place among strangers—stop the second!

"Why can I hesitate? Why not go on to stop the third, and last?

"That I can. Stop the third, and last, is my agreement, now the announcement of Armadale's death has reached this neighbourhood.

the character of Armadale's widow, with my marriage certificate in my hand to prove my claim. It is no other as the sun at noonday. Thanks to the exact similarity between the two names, and thanks to the careful manner in which the secret of that similarity has been kept, I may be the wife of the dark Allan Armadale, known as such to nobody but my husband and myself; and I may, out of that very position, claim the character of widow of the light Allan Armadale, with proof to support me (in the shape of my marriage certificate) which would be proof in the estimation of the most incredulous person living.

"To think of my having put all this in my Diary! To think of my having actually contemplated this very situation, and having seen nothing more in it, at the time, than a reason (if I married Midwinter) for consenting to appear in the world under my husband's assumed name!

"What is it daunts me? The dread of obstacles? The fear of discovery?

"Where are the obstacles? where is the fear of discovery?

"I am actually suspected all over the neighbourhood, of intriguing to be mistress of Thorpe-Ambrose. I am the only person who knows the real turn that Armadale's inclinations have taken. Not a creature but myself is as yet aware of his early morning meetings with Miss Milroy. If it is necessary to part them, I can do it at any moment, by an anonymous line to the major. If it is necessary to remove Armadale from Thorpe-Ambrose, I can get him away at three days' notice. His own lips informed me, when I last spoke to him, that he would go to the ends of the earth to be friends again with Midwinter, if Midwinter would let him. I have only to tell Midwinter to write from London, and ask to be reconciled; and Midwinter would obey me—and to London Armadale would go. Every difficulty, at starting, is smoothed over ready to my hand. Every after-difficulty I could manage for myself. In the whole venture—desperate as it looks to pass myself off for the widow of one man, while I am all the while the wife of the other—there is absolutely no necessity that waste twice considering, but the one terrible necessity of Armadale's death.

"His death! It might be a terrible necessity to any other woman—but is it, ought it to be terrible to me?

"I hate him for his mother's sake. I hate him for his own sake. I hate him for going to London behind my back, and making inquiries about me. I hate him for forcing me out of my situation before I wanted to go. I hate him for destroying all my hopes of marrying him, and throwing me back helpless on my own miserable life. But, oh, other what I have done already in the past time, how can I? how can I?

"The girl, you—the girl who has come between us; who has taken him away from me; who has openly insulted me this very day—how the girl whose heart is set on him would feel it, if he died! What a glance on her, if I did it! And when I was resolved on Armadale's widow, what a triumph for me. Triumph! It is more than triumph—it is the triumph of me. A triumph that could be called, in the eyes of

could be assailed, to hide myself in from my past life! Comfort, luxury, wealth! An income of twelve hundred a year secured to me—secured by a will which has been looked at by a lawyer; secured independently of anything he can say or do himself! I never had twelve hundred a year. At my luckiest time, I never had half as much, ready to my hand. What have I got now? Just five pounds left in the world—and the prospect next week of a debtor's prison.

"But, oh, after what I have done already in the past time, how can I? how can I?

"Some women—in my place, and with my recollections to look back on—would feel it differently. Some women would say—'It's easier the second time than the first. Why can't I? why can't I?'

"Oh, you Devil tempting me, is there no Angel near, to raise some timely obstacle between this and to-morrow, which might help me to give it up?

"I shall sink under it—I shall sink, if I write or think of it any more! I'll shut up these leaves and go out again. I'll get some common person to come with me, and we will talk of common things. I'll take out the woman of the house, and her children. We will go and see something. There is a show of some kind in the town—I'll treat them to it. I'm not such an ill-natured woman when I try; and the landlady has really been kind to me. Surely I might occupy my mind a little, in seeing her and her children enjoying themselves.

"A minute since, I shut up these leaves as I said I would; and now I have opened them again, I don't know why. I think my brain is turned. I feel as if something was lost out of my mind; I feel as if I ought to find it here.

"I have found it! *Midwinter*!!!

"Is it possible that I can have been thinking of the reasons For and Against, for an hour past—writing *Midwinter's* name over and over again—speculating seriously on marrying him—and all the time not once considering that, even with every other impediment removed, he alone, when the time came, would be an insurmountable obstacle in my way? How the effort to face the consideration of Armadale's death absorbed me in that degree? I suppose it has. I can't account for such extraordinary forgetfulness on my part, in any other way.

"I will stop and think it out, as I have thought out all the rest! Shall I ask myself if the obstacle of *Midwinter* would after all, when the time came, be the insurmountable obstacle that it looks at present? Shall I ask myself if there are other obstacles? I have made up my mind to get the better of the competition. I have made up my mind to give my husband and his children a home; I have made up my mind to show my family what I am capable of.

"I will stop and think it out, as I have thought out all the rest!

children distract me. I have left them, to run back here before post-time and write a line to Mrs. Oldershaw.

"The dread that I shall sink under the temptation has grown stronger and stronger on me. I have determined to put it beyond my power to have my own way and follow my own will. Mother Oldershaw shall be the salvation of me for the first time since I have known her. If I can't pay my note-of-hand, she threatens me with an arrest. Well, she *shall* arrest me. In the state my mind is in now, the best thing that can happen to me is to be taken away from Thorpe-Ambrose, whether I like it or not. I will write and say that I am to be found here. I will write and tell her, in so many words, that the best service she can render me is to lock me up !

"*Seven o'clock.*—The letter has gone to the post. I had begun to feel a little easier, when the children came in to thank me for taking them to the show. One of them is a girl, and the girl upset me. She is a forward child, and her hair is nearly the colour of mine. She said, 'I shall be like you when I have grown bigger, shan't I?' Her idiot of a mother said, 'Please to excuse her, miss,' and took her out of the room, laughing. Like me ! I don't pretend to be fond of the child—but think of her being like Me !

"*Saturday morning.*—I have done well for once in acting on impulse, and writing as I did to Mrs. Oldershaw. The only new circumstance that has happened, is another circumstance in my favour !

"Major Milroy has answered Armadale's letter, entreating permission to call at the cottage, and justify himself. His daughter read it in silence, when Armadale handed it to her at their meeting this morning, in the park. But they talked about it afterwards, loud enough for me to hear them. The major persists in the course he has taken. He says his opinion of Armadale's conduct has been formed, not on common report, but on Armadale's own letters ; and he sees no reason to alter the conclusion at which he arrived when the correspondence between them was closed.

"This little matter had, I confess, slipped out of my memory. It might have ended awkwardly for me. If Major Milroy had been less obstinately wedded to his own opinion, Armadale might have justified himself ; the marriage engagement might have been acknowledged ; and all my power of influencing the matter might have been at an end. As it is, they must continue to keep the engagement strictly secret ; and Miss Milroy, who has never ventured herself near the great house since the thunderstorm forced her into it for shelter, will be less likely than ever to venture there now. I can part them when I please ; with an anonymous line to the major, I can part them when I please !

"After having discussed the letter, the talk between them turned on what they were to do next. Major Milroy's severity, as it soon appeared, produced the usual results. Armadale returned to the subject of the elopement—and, this time she listened to him. There is everything to

drive her to it. Her outfit of clothes is nearly ready; and the summer holidays, at the school which has been chosen for her, end at the end of next week. When I left them, they had decided to meet again and settle something on Monday.

"The last words I heard him address to her, before I went away, shook me a little. He said: 'There is one difficulty, Neelie, that needn't trouble us, at any rate. I have got plenty of money.' And then he kissed her. The way to his life began to look an easier way to me when he talked of his money, and kissed her.

"Some hours have passed, and the more I think of it, the more I fear the blank interval between this time and the time when Mrs. Oldershaw calls in the law, and protects me against myself. It might have been better if I had stopped at home this morning. But how could I? After the insult she offered me yesterday, I tingled all over to go and look at her.

"To-day; Sunday; Monday; Tuesday. They can't arrest me for the money before Wednesday. And my miserable five pounds are dwindling to four! And he told her he had plenty of money! And she blushed and trembled when he kissed her! It might have been better for him, better for her, and better for me, if my debt had fallen due yesterday, and if the bailiffs had their hands on me at this moment.

"Suppose I had the means of leaving Thorpe-Ambrose by the next train, and going somewhere abroad, and absorbing myself in some new interest, among new people. Could I do it, rather than look again at that easy way to his life which would smooth the way to everything else?

"Perhaps I might. But where is the money to come from? Surely some way of getting it struck me a day or two since? Yes; that mean idea of asking Armadale to help me! Well; I *will* be mean for once. I'll give him the chance of making a generous use of that well-filled purse which it is such a comfort to him to reflect on in his present circumstances. It would soften my heart towards any man if he lent me money in my present extremity; and if Armadale lends me money, it might soften my heart towards him. When shall I go? At once! I won't give myself time to feel the degradation of it, and to change my mind.

"*Three o'clock.*—I mark the hour. He has sealed his own doom. He has insulted me.

"Yes! I have suffered it once from Miss Milroy. And I have now suffered it a second time from Armadale himself. An insult—a marked, merciless, deliberate insult in the open day!

"I had got through the town, and had advanced a few hundred yards along the road that leads to the great house, when I saw Armadale, at a little distance, coming towards me. He was walking fast, evidently, with some errand of his own to take him to the town. The instant he caught sight of me he stopped, coloured up, took off his hat, hesitated, and turned aside down a lane behind him, which I happen to know would take him exactly in the contrary direction to the direction in which he was walking

when he first saw me. His conduct said, in so many words, 'Miss Milroy may hear of it; I daren't run the risk of being seen speaking to you.' Men have used me heartlessly; men have done and said hard things to me—but no man living ever yet treated me as if I was plague-struck, and as if the very air about me was infected by my presence!

"I say no more. When he walked away from me down that lane, he walked to his death. I have written to Midwinter to expect me in London next week, and to be ready for our marriage soon afterwards.

"*Four o'clock*—Half-an-hour since, I put on my bonnet to go out and post the letter to Midwinter myself. And here I am, still in my room, with my mind torn by doubts, and my letter on the table.

"Armada counts for nothing in the perplexities that are now torturing me. It is Midwinter who makes me hesitate. Can I take the first of those three steps that lead me to the end, without the common caution of looking at consequences? Can I marry Midwinter, without knowing beforehand how to meet the obstacle of my husband, when the time comes which transforms me from the living Armadale's wife, to the dead Armadale's widow?

"Why can't I think of it, when I know I *must* think of it? Why can't I look at it as steadily as I have looked at all the rest? I feel his kisses on my lips; I feel his tears on my bosom; I feel his arms round me again. He is far away in London—and yet, he is here and won't let me think of it!

"Why can't I wait a little? Why can't I let Time help me? Time? It's Saturday! What need is there to think of it, unless I like? There is no post to London to-day. I *must* wait. If I posted the letter it wouldn't go. Besides, to-morrow I may hear from Mrs. Oldershaw. I ought to wait to hear from Mrs. Oldershaw. I can't consider myself a free woman till I know what Mrs. Oldershaw means to do. There is a necessity for waiting till to-morrow. I shall take my bonnet off, and lock the letter up in my desk.

Sunday morning.—There is no resisting it! One after another the circumstances crowd on me. They come thicker and thicker, and they all force me one way.

"I have got Mother Oldershaw's answer. The wretch fawns on me, and cringes to me. I can see, as plainly as if she had acknowledged it, that she suspects me of seeing my own way to success at Thorpe-Ambrose without her assistance. Having found threatening me useless, she tries coaxing me now. I am her darling Lydia again! She is quite shocked that I could imagine she ever really intended to arrest her bosom friend—and she has only to entreat me, as a favour to herself, to renew the bill!

"I say once more, no mortal creature could resist it! Time after time I have tried to escape the temptation; and time after time the circumstances drive me back again. I can struggle no longer. The post that takes the letters to-night shall take my letter to Midwinter among the rest.

"To-night! If I give myself till to-night, something else may happen.

If I give myself till to-night, I may hesitate again. I'm weary of the torture of hesitating. I must and will have relief in the present, cost what it may in the future. My letter to Midwinter will drive me mad if I see it staring and staring at me in my desk any longer. I can post it in ten minutes' time—and I will !

"It is done. The first of the three steps that lead me to the end, is a step taken. My mind is quieter—the letter is in the post.

"By to-morrow Midwinter will receive it. Before the end of the week, Armadale must be publicly seen to leave Thorpe-Ambrose ; and I must be publicly seen to leave with him.

"Have I looked at the consequences of my marriage to Midwinter ? No ! Do I know how to meet the obstacle of my husband, when the time comes which transforms me from the living Armadale's wife, to the dead Armadale's widow ?

"No ! When the time comes, I must meet the obstacle as I best may. I am going blindfold then—so far as Midwinter is concerned—into this frightful risk ? Yes ; blindfold. Am I out of my senses ? Very likely. Or am I a little too fond of him to look the thing in the face ? I daresay. Who cares ?

"I won't, I won't, I won't think of it ! Haven't I a will of my own ? And can't I think, if I like, of something else ?

"Here is Mother Jezebel's cringing letter. That is something else to think of. I'll answer it. I am in a fine humour for writing to Mother Jezebel.

* * * * *

Conclusion of Miss Gwilt's Letter to Mrs. Oldershaw.

" I told you, when I broke off, that I would wait before I finished this, and ask my Diary if I could safely tell you what I have now got it in my mind to do. Well, I have asked ; and my Diary says, 'Don't tell her !' Under these circumstances, I close my letter—with my best excuses for leaving you in the dark.

"I shall probably be in London before long—and I may tell you by word of mouth what I don't think it safe to write here. ~ Mind, I make no promise ! It all depends on how I feel towards you at the time. I don't doubt your discretion—but (under certain circumstances) I am not so sure of your courage.

"L. G."

"P.S.—My best thanks for your permission to renew the bill. I decline profiting by the proposal. The money will be ready, when the money is due. I have a friend now in London who will pay it, if I ask him. Do you wonder who the friend is ? You will wonder at one or two other things, Mrs. Oldershaw, before many weeks more are over your head and mine."

The Family of Temple.

"THERE is a certain productiveness," says Aristotle, "in the families of men, as in the things that grow in the fields; and, sometimes, if the family be good, extraordinary men are for a certain time produced." Other high authority might be quoted in support of this observation, which is not without its value to historians and biographers. But the truth is that genealogy has suffered at the hands of genealogists. Partly by their ignorance of the higher applications of which it is capable,—partly by the falsities with which they have played into the hands of the fashionable reporter and the fashionable novelist,—they have lowered the credit of a study at once of much historical importance, and of much picturesque interest. Every now and then, however, some event occurs calling attention to the truths with which it is the proper business of genealogy to deal; and the recent death of Lord Palmerston had this, besides so many other points, of higher and more mournful significance. When everything else was being recorded of him, it was also recorded that he was the last male of his family,—a family of very ancient descent, and of high and long-continued intellectual distinction. The fact in itself touched the imagination of a people so keenly alive to the charm of tradition as the English. But those who from an old interest in such questions had become aware how essentially Palmerston was a child of his house—a Temple of the Temples,—naturally felt the weight of the fact more vividly: to them, his death was the fall of an old tree, of an old tower, a tree that would give no more fruit, a tower that would no more shelter human and intellectual life. Let us place ourselves for a little in the position of one of these moralising inquirers; and see from what kind of stock the late Premier came, and how far its history justifies the old belief that every family, like every plant, has a life of its own, and a likeness running through all its leaves and flowers.

Thanks in great measure to the kind of genealogists whom we have indicated in the sentence above, most family histories begin with a fable. The ancients made Plato descend from Neptune, Cæsar from Venus, and Antony from Hercules, just as our own early chronicles derive Alfred from Woden. In modern times our inventions are on a humbler scale, but are equally destitute of historical truth. We fasten on to the Norman baronage, families that rose by the Reformation; and descendants of provincial aldermen, whose names betray a suspicious connection with the old sport of bull-baiting, occasionally hold themselves up as representatives of the mediæval chivalry. The Hamiltons are not content to have helped to put Bruce on the throne, they must needs be sprung from

the Bellomont Earls of Leicester. The Cavendishes are dissatisfied with Wolsey's gentleman-usher, and lay claim to be scions of the higher race of Gernon. It has been the fortune of the Temples to find themselves associated with one of the prettiest legends of the middle ages, which has formed the subject of one of the prettiest poems of our own time. They have been given out as coming from the stout old Earl Leofric, of the Confessor's time, and his lady Godgifu or Godiva, who saved Coventry from a harsh impost by riding through the market-place clad only in her beautiful long hair. Leofric (who died in A. D. 1057) and his spouse are, of course, as really historical personages as the Confessor and Edith. And though the Godiva legend does not occur in the Saxon Chronicle, in William of Malmesbury, or in Florence of Worcester, it is found in Brompton, who flourished in 1193,* less than a century and a half after the date of its heroine. Nor have we a right to doubt the truth of any story simply because there is a noble and daring poetry about it. But as regards the descent of the Temples from Leofric and Godiva, that is a comparatively modern statement. Dugdale knew nothing of it, though he gives a full account of the earl's real successors and family in his *Baronage*, and much information about him, his wife, and their pious and generous doings, in his *Warwickshire*. An earlier writer, and more important for this special question than even Dugdale—a writer whose *Leicestershire* is said to have suggested Dugdale's *Warwickshire*—knew no more of the fact than he. We speak of William Burton, the elder brother of the author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, to whose curious mind his own bore a strong family resemblance. Burton was a Leicestershire squire himself, and in speaking of the lands of "Temple" in Sparkenhoe hundred, near Besworth, from which the whole family of Temple derived its name, this is what he tells us:—"This land was granted by one of the old earls of Leicester to the Knights Templars. This land was afterwards granted by the Templars to a family of the place called Temple, being of great account in those parts." (Burton's *Leicestershire*, p. 264). Burton, then, knew nothing of the Saxon origin of the family; and it is certain that in the famous Sir William Temple's time they looked upon themselves as having "come in with the Conquest." It is often loosely assumed that a family must be either Norman or Saxon, though Burgundians and Flemings, Angevins and Poitevins, are found among the settlers in England in the stormy and adventurous ages during which the foundations of its modern life were laid. To which of the various races struggling for place and power the founder of the Temples belonged cannot now be known. The earliest names in the pedigree, Robert, William, and Henry, are those of Norman dukes and sovereigns,—an indication which has sometimes been allowed to have suggestive value in such cases. At all events we are safe in assuming that the men to whom

* Waverley, in the next century, adds a slight picturesque touch to Brompton's narrative. Her hair, he says, concealed her, all but her very white legs—apparently a curious contradiction.

the Templars gave land, would have the qualities which the Order of the Temple held in honour; and that he acquired his estate as his descendant acquired the premiership, by being superior to other rivals in the battle of life.

Dismissing, then, the descent from Leofric as fabulous and modern, and trusting to old writers and official pedigrees, we shall be content to derive the Temples from Robertus Templis de Temple Hall, living in the reign of Henry III.—a date to which only something like a tenth part of the peerage can be satisfactorily traced. Robertus de Temple was succeeded by William, and by Henry flourishing in the reign of Edward I., whose marriage with Matilda, daughter of John Ribbesford, is the first that we find upon record. The five generations which followed allied themselves with Langley, Barwell, Dubernon, Bracebridge, and Kingscott,* and the family ranked among the oldest and most considerable of the Leicestershire gentry. By siding, however, with Richard III., they lost most of their estate. Soon after the Reformation what was left came into the possession of some other Temples from Staffordshire, carrying different coat-armour.† And, at last, they, too, sold both the lands and the hall, and though some prosperous cadets of the house—such as the celebrated Sir William and his father—were anxious to recover it, they never could.

We must now turn our attention to those cadets, for it was among them that appeared the eminent men to whom the name owes its modern celebrity. During the reign of Henry VI., a younger son of Temple of Temple Hall, named Thomas, settled himself at Witney in Oxfordshire. In three generations his descendants had acquired land in Warwickshire, and in the sixteenth century his representative acquired Stowe in Buckinghamshire. This was Peter Temple of Marston-Boteler in Warwickshire and Stowe in Bucks, whose eldest son, John, was the ancestor of the Temples of Stowe, and his second, Anthony, of the Viscounts Palmerston. John lies buried at Dersot, in Warwickshire, with the following quaint epitaph, testifying to his general felicity and opulence :—

Cur liberos hic plurimos,
Cur hic amicos plurimos,
Et plurimas pecunias,
Vis scire cur reliquerit ?
TEMPELLUS ad plures abiit.

The son of this prosperous gentleman was Sir Thomas Temple, of Stowe, the first baronet. The second and third baronets both sat for the town of Buckingham in the parliaments of the Charleses. The fourth—Sir Richard—fought under Marlborough, and was created Baron Cobham ‡ in 1714, and, in 1718, Viscount Cobham, with remainder to his sister,

* Visitation of Leicestershire : Harl. MS. 1180.

† Barton.

‡ He chose this title, as having a descent from the old Lords Cobham of Kent, first summoned to Parliament in A.D. 1312.

Hester, wife of Richard Grenville of Wooton. This is the Cobham of Pope's well-known lines :—

And you, brave Cobham, to the latest breath,
Shall feel your ruling passion strong in death:
Such in those moments as in all the past,
Oh, save my country, Heaven ! shall be your last.

Lord Cobham died without issue in 1749, when his barony and viscounty devolved on his sister, Hester Grenville, mother of the first Earl Temple, ancestress of the Dukes of Buckingham, and, what is of much more moral interest, grandmother of William Pitt. If, again to quote Aristotle, "the having had many illustrious persons in the family" is a necessary mark of nobility, then this is an honour in which the Temples excel houses of much higher pretension.

While the Temple tree planted in Stowe was thus flourishing like a green bay-tree, the branch sprung from Anthony, younger son of Peter Temple, first of Stowe, had acquired a less splendid position but a more brilliant name. Anthony's son William, bred at Eton and Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, became, in the first half of Elizabeth's reign, master of the free school at Lincoln. A Latin essay on a philosophical subject which he dedicated, in 1581, to Sir Philip Sydney, won the admiration of that last rose of the summer of chivalry, who took Temple into his employment as a secretary, and into his intimacy as a friend. Sir Philip died in his arms at Arnheim, and dying commended him to the Earl of Essex, besides leaving him by will an annuity of thirty pounds. The friend of Sydney became the friend of Devereux, and having lost one patron on the field lost another on the scaffold. After the death of Essex, Temple went to seek his fortunes in Ireland. He became Provost of Dublin College, which he represented in the Irish Parliament in 1618. He was afterwards a Master in Chancery, and a knight, and he died at an advanced age in 1625. From this Sir William Temple, the first of the family connected with Ireland, the late Lord Palmerston was sixth in descent. As a Roman would have said, he was the Premier's *tritavus*,—a word which we should have to render in English by great-great-great-grandfather ! By his wife, a Derbyshire woman, William left a son who became Sir John Temple, and who sustained the intellectual reputation which the family had begun to acquire. He was educated under his father at Dublin. He travelled in his youth. He had access to the court of Charles the First, and to the greatest personages of the time, and he continued the family friendship with the Sydneys. Sir Philip's nephew, Robert Sydney, was now second Earl of Leicester, "a man of great parts," says Lord Clarendon, "very conversant in books, and much addicted to the mathematics." In the Sydney Papers we find the countess writing to her husband (A.D. 1638) of "Sir John Temple, who is inquisitive in all affairs, and much your servant." There were tender associations between Temple and the earl's family. Sir John had married Esther Hammond, a sister of Dr. Hammond the celebrated divine. The doctor held the living of Penhurst, and at

Penshurst Temple lost his wife. "Your Penshurst," Temple writes to the earl in 1638, "was the place where God saw fitt to take from me the desire of mine eyes and the most sweet companion of my life; a place that must never be forgotten by me, not only in regard of those blessed ashes that ly now treasured up there, and my desire that by your lordship's favour, *cum fatalis et meus dies venerit*, I may return to that dust, but in respect also of the extraordinary civilities I then received from your incomparable lady." He goes on to show how tenderly Lady Leicester (a Percy, and the mother of Algernon Sydney) had behaved at this great crisis, which all readers of her letters will readily believe. Sir John Temple also writes to the earl from Berwick, where he had accompanied the Court when the king was marching against and negotiating with the Scots; and on another occasion urges him to try for the Secretaryship of State, likely to be vacated by the resignation of Sir John Coke. "And further give me leave," writes he, "to tell your lordship that I think this the proper time to move in, and that I find such stirring now at Court, as I apprehend him not long-lived in his place. So as if you neglect now to stir, *you will have some evil angel take the opportunity while the waters are troubled to help in some stigmatick or otherwise infirm person.*" There is a touch of the family wit as of the family shrewdness here; but Sir John Temple found an opportunity of showing still higher qualities. The Earl of Leicester went to Ireland as lord-lieutenant, and appointed Temple (who was knighted in 1640) to an important post. A heavy responsibility, to which he was not unequal, fell upon him when the rebellion broke out. Afterwards, when Leicester was succeeded by Ormond, Temple was imprisoned for opposing the cessation which Ormond was commanded to make with the rebels. This attracted the favourable attention of the Parliament to him, and in 1644 he was exchanged, and made a commissioner in Munster. Never an extreme man however, he was dismissed for voting that the king's proposals from the Isle of Wight were sufficient grounds for peace. Later, he was both employed and rewarded by Cromwell, but that did not hinder him from prospering under the Restoration. He was Master of the Rolls, privy councillor, treasurer, and enjoyed an opulent, and, we are expressly told, "hospitable" old age. He died in 1677. Sir John Temple, besides being a politician, was the author of a *History of the Irish Rebellion*. It has always received the praise of veracity, and one cannot look into it without seeing that the writer was a scholar and a man of sense. What is worthy of notice also, is, that it is written strictly from the point of view of an Englishman, and of an Englishman who had no great respect for the Irish race.

The eldest son of Sir John Temple and Esther Hammond was the famous Sir William Temple, who continued to be the most widely-known man that ever bore the ancient name till the days of the third Lord Palmerston. Born in London in 1628, he was educated at Penshurst, at Bishop Stortford, and at Cambridge under Cudworth, and then set out to travel on the Continent. In passing through the Isle of Wight, where the

King was then imprisoned, he made the acquaintance of Dorothy Osborne, the daughter of Sir Peter Osborne, governor of Guernsey for his Majesty. The youth's father was in the Long Parliament; the young lady's father was a cavalier. Sir John desired a greater match for his son; Sir Peter desired a greater match for his daughter; and their engagement, opposed on both sides, lasted for seven years. During part of this time, William Temple lived in France, where he mastered the French, and in the Low Countries and Germany, where he mastered the Spanish language. He was married at last in 1654, and took up his abode with his affectionate and sprightly Dorothy in Ireland. His head-quarters were in the county of Carlow, where he lived on a moderate income, and spent much of his time in reading, and doubtless in forming that graceful and pleasant style which entitles him to rank among the founders of polite English prose. Happy in his marriage, he was most unfortunate in the health of his children, five of whom died in as many years. The Restoration brought Temple into public life. When an Irish Parliament was called, he was chosen with his father for the county of Carlow, and soon attracting the attention of the new lord-lieutenant, the Duke of Ormond, was introduced by him to the powerful minister, Lord Arlington. His first employment arose out of the first of the Dutch wars of this reign, when he was sent to negotiate with our ally the Bishop of Munster. His success brought him a baronetcy and the post of Resident at Brussels, in which city he was when in 1667 the French invaded Flanders. The power of Lewis now began to alarm Europe. Charles II. had not yet become quite his tool; and Temple was sent to the Hague to conclude with Sweden and Holland the great negotiation known as the Triple Alliance, which gave a check to the French plans. He now became ambassador at the Hague, and made the friendship of De Witt and of the young Prince of Orange. He remained there till French intrigues had reversed the English policy, and driven us into a war with our recent and most natural ally. Temple at once retired to his house at Shreen, his gardens, and his books, and employed himself in writing his excellent *Observations on the United Provinces*, which the Dutch still cherish and make a student's text-book, after the author's countrymen have ceased to read it. From this retreat he was summoned in the autumn of 1673 to conclude a peace with Holland; and next year went there again as ambassador extraordinary to mediate for a general peace, which after much delay was brought about by the treaty of Nimeguen. It was at this period, too, that he took an important part in bringing about the marriage of the Prince of Orange with the Princess Mary, which had such vital consequences for Great Britain.

Up to this time the public life of Sir William Temple had been on the whole eminently successful. He had conducted negotiations of the first consequence, which will always preserve his reputation in the highest rank of diplomatists. He had won the esteem and confidence of the greatest statesmen in Europe. His public character was not only lofty,

but pure; his private character undeniably, and for that age, even singularly respectable. He might have been expected to have risen a few grades more, and to have left the name of a minister inferior in parts to none, superior in character to all of the ministers his contemporaries. But he had now culminated. The stormiest part of Charles II.'s reign had come, and he shrank from the helm. He was elected to Parliament for the University of Cambridge, and he did nothing in Parliament. He invented a scheme for a new constitution of the Council, which would not work, and soon found that his colleagues were tired of him, and that the king was content he should go. Accordingly he retired once more, sick of the worry of public affairs, to the country, and fixed his residence at Moor Park, near Farnham, in Surrey. "I had learned," he says, "by living long in Courts and public affairs, that I was fit to live no longer in either. I found the arts of a Court were contrary to the frankness and openness of my nature, and the constraint of public business too great for the liberty of my humour and my life. The common and proper ends of both are the advancement of men's fortunes, and that I never minded, having as much as I needed, and what is more, as I desired. . . . I knew very well the arts of a Court are to talk the present language, to serve the present turn, and to follow the present humour of the prince, whatever it is. Of all these I found myself so incapable that I could not talk a language I did not mean, nor serve a turn I did not like, nor follow any man's humour wholly against my own. Besides, I have had in twenty years' experience enough of the uncertainty of princes, the caprices of fortune, the corruption of ministers, the violence of factions, the unsteadiness of councils, and the infidelity of friends; nor do I think the rest of my life enough to make any new experiments."* There is a deep tinge of discontent in this passage, characteristic of Temple, and a right understanding of which is necessary if we would do him justice. His professed love of retirement and independence was no pretence. It can be proved that he was a more honest and patriotic public man than most of his contemporaries, and that he declined offices which would have put him all but at the head of the kingdom. Yet, if philosophy went for something in his withdrawal from politics, so did a certain want of moral stamina, and a conscious unfitness to meet the Essexes, Halifaxes, and Shaftesburys with the weapons which were alone of any use against competitors of their stamp. The distinctive *ethos* of the Temples has been a union of more than usual of the kind of talent which makes men of letters, with more than usual of the kind of talent which makes men of business. The secretary of Essex began with philosophy and prospered in life; Sir William, too, prospered in life, and liked philosophy. But with a larger share of literary genius than any other Temple, Sir William had a correspondingly larger share of sensitiveness, and did not,—like his father, for instance,—take heartily to the rough work of his vocation, and carry himself

* Temple's Memoirs: Part, Third.

successfully through its trials. He loved the retirement of which he talked so much, sincerely, but not enough; and had a hankering after the great world of action that he had quitted, which was often too strong not only for his philosophy, but (through its action on his temper) for the comfort of those who lived with him; as Swift in his youth experienced. "He had an extraordinary life and spirit in his humour," says his sister, Lady Giffard, "with so agreeable turns of wit and fancy in his conversation, that nobody was welcomer in all sorts of company, and some have observed, that he never had a mind to make anybody kind to him, without compassing his designs." But the same superior and sensible woman, while again describing his "humour" as "gay," adds that it was "very unequal, from cruel fits of spleen and melancholy;" the philosopher being, it seems, "subject to great damps from the sudden changes of weather, but chiefly from the crosses and surprising turns in his business, and disappointments he met with so often in his endeavours to contribute to the honour and service of his country, which he thought himself two or three times so near compassing, that he could not think with patience of what had hindered it, or of those that he thought had been the occasion of his disappointment." In short he was only half happy in his own ideally happy life. He loved to think that he was enjoying the intellectual Horatian calm. He translated the *Tyrrhena regum progenies*, and called on Mæcenas to—

Leave fulsome palaces for awhile, and come
From stately palaces that tower so high,
And spread so far; the dust and business fly,
The smoke and noise of mighty Rome,
And cares that on embroidered carpets lie.

But his secret and, probably, half unconscious wish was to be Horace and Mæcenas both in one. He liked to feel that he was enjoying the air from the Sabine Hills and the fresh communion with the sages of Greece, the rather that the pleasure was a pleasure of which only wise men are capable. But he had also a strong, unquiet longing for the Palatine, an uneasy desire to be keeping the Parthians in order, and making his voice heard amidst the snows of the Tanaia. No man so divided in feeling and haunted by so many dissatisfied regrets, could be quite happy in the pleasantest retreat. And, whether at Sheen or Moor Park, the retreat of Temple was eminently pleasant. His orange-trees were only rivalled at Fontainebleau and in one spot of Holland; his peaches—by the admission of Frenchmen—equalled those of Gascony; and Italians agreed that at least his white figs bore comparison with any produced on the south of the Alps.* His garden at Moor Park was bounded by a canal in the Dutch fashion, which had the double merit of pleasing his eye and recalling the days of De Witt and the Triple Alliance. But, in spite of all this, and of his lettered recreation, which was a higher kind of gardening in its way, and of the love and affection of sister and wife, a sly east wind or a provoking recollection of Arlington's treachery would poison everything

* Temple's *Essay upon the Gardens of Epicurus, or of Gardening*.

for him for days. Then he was very subject to the gout, which had come to him, he tells us, "from many ancestors," and which fell upon him at the Hague when he was on his last mission. At first he found great relief from *moxa*, an Indian moss recommended to him by a Dutch gentleman, and which used to be burnt against the part affected. But the disease recurred through life, and, helped by "the spleen," caused Sir William many a sad hour. "Don't you remember," Swift writes to Stella, "how I used to be in pain when Sir William Temple would look cold and out of humour for three or four days, and I used to suspect a hundred reasons? I have plucked up my spirits since then, faith; he spoiled a fine gentleman." Temple had, indeed, some of the most disagreeable features of "a disappointed man" in his old age, and, of all human beings, Swift was the one to whom such a contact was most pernicious. Yet—not to overlook the great intellectual benefit that Swift derived from his residence with Temple, so justly pointed out by Lord Macaulay—it is further satisfactory to remember that the last years of their intercourse were happier than the first. Temple must have come to see Swift's merit before he introduced him to King William (of whom the dean used to tell that he taught him to cut asparagus in the Dutch fashion), and before he committed to him the charge of his literary remains.

The works of Sir William Temple are little read now-a-days, a neglect which he shares with greater men. Upon the whole both Macaulay and Thackeray have lowered his reputation too far in the eyes of the great multitude which never looks into such questions for itself. His learning was superficial; his style has become old-fashioned; and few take the trouble to examine the merits of a prose, which, written before the days of Addison or Steele, combines much of the dignity of Clarendon with much of the ease of Dryden. Those who do will be amused to find here and there, among other qualities, the shrewd worldly philosophy and common-sense, the airy social jocosity, with which England was so familiar from the lips of the other Temple who has just joined Sir William in the Abbey. The following passages from Sir William's chapter on the religion of the Netherlands anticipate all the now hacknied philosophy of toleration, and have points which Lord Palmerston might have pricked into some ignorant Scotch presbytery, resisting his counsel to them not to encourage cholera by dirt with the intention of averting it by sham fasting and ungrammatical prayer:—

"Now the way to our future happiness has been perpetually disputed throughout the world, and must be left at last to the impressions made upon every man's belief and conscience, either by natural or supernatural arguments and means, which impressions men may disguise or dissemble, but no man can resist. For belief is no more in a man's power than his stature or his feature; and he that tells me I must change my opinions for his, without other arguments that have to me the force of conviction, may as well tell me I must change my grey eyes for others like his that are black, because these are lovelier or more in esteem. He that tells me I must inform myself, has reason if I do it not. But if I endeavour it all that I can, and perhaps more than he ever did, and yet still differ from him; and he, that, it may be, is idle, will have me study on, and inform myself better, and so to the end of my life; then I easily understand what he means by informing, which is in short that I must do it till I come to be of his opinion. . . . A man that tells me my opinions are changed

or ridiculous, impertinent or unreasonable, because they differ from his, seems to intend a quarrel instead of a dispute, and calls me fool or madman with a little more circumstance, though perhaps I pass for one as well in my sense as he. . . . Yet these are the common civilities, in religious arguments, of sufficient and conceited men, who talk much of right reason, and mean always their own, and make their private imagination the measure of general truth. But such language determines all between us, and the dispute comes to an end in these words at last, which it might as well have ended in at first, that he is in the right, and I am in the wrong. . . .

Nor could I even understand how those who call themselves, and the world usually calls, *religious men*, come to put so great weight upon those points of belief which men never have agreed in, and so little upon those of virtue and morality in which they have hardly ever disagreed.*

The form of such passages as these is old-fashioned. But the spirit is essentially modern, and is the same spirit of critical, but not irreverent common-sense, which made Lord Palmerston for a long time peculiarly distasteful to fanatics. Sir William Temple, in consequence of such writing, and of his disposition for handling such questions in the tone of a man of the world, was called an "Epicurean,"—a title which was bestowed in its bad acceptation, but which he was quite content to bear, and indeed assumed to himself, in its good one.

The last years of Sir William Temple were disturbed by family losses and bodily infirmity. He long survived a beloved daughter. His only son died before him. His wife died in 1694. The natural toughness of the stock carried him on to his seventieth, as it had his father to his seventy-seventh year, and the end came in 1698. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, according to the subjoined directions in his will :—

I do order my body to be interred in the West Ile of Westminster Abbey, near those two dear pledges, my wife and my daughter Diana, that lye there already, and that after mine and my sister Giffard's decease, a large stone of black marble may be set up against the wall, with this inscription :—

SIRI SUISQUE CHARISSIMIS
DIANE TEMPLE DILECTISSIMÆ FILIÆ,
DOROTHEÆ OSBOEN CONJUNCTISSIMÆ CONJUGI,
ET MARTHE GIFFARD OPTIMÆ SORORI,
HOC QUALIBETQUE MONUMENTUM
POSI CURAVIT
GUILIELMUS TEMPLE BARONETTUS.

Lady Giffard died in 1729, when the monument was placed where Temple had desired.

The son who died in Temple's life-time had married a French lady, by whom he left two daughters, one of whom became the wife of her cousin, a son of Sir John Temple, and the other of Bacon of Shrubland in Suffolk. Both lines failed between Sir William's age, and our own ; and he was represented by the late Lord Palmerston, a lineal descendant of his younger brother.†

This younger brother was Sir John Temple, who is spoken of as

* *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands*, cap. 2.

† *Courtney's Memoirs of Sir William Temple*. Of course it is not our business, in a paper like this, to trace out every Temple that may possibly exist, but only the line from which distinguished men have come.

"the best lawyer in Ireland." He sat for Carlow, was Speaker of the Irish House of Commons before he was thirty, and was long first solicitor and then attorney-general in the sister kingdom. It was to him that Archbishop Sheldon paid what has justly been called, for an archbishop, the "singular compliment" that "he had the curse of the Gospel, because all men spoke well of him." What we know of him shows that he had the talent and the personal popularity of his line. His wife was the daughter of Sir Abraham Yarner, muster-master-general for Ireland. He died in East Sheen, Surrey, in 1704.

To Sir John succeeded his son Henry, created Viscount Palmerston in 1722. In the preamble to his patent he is said to be come of illustrious ancestors; and it is added that his grandfather and father had discharged public duties in Ireland with fidelity, prudence, and abstinence—"proclaris ortum majoribus," "*avus et pater muneribus in Hibernia publicis fide, prudentia et abstinentia functi sunt.*" His wife was Anne, daughter of Abraham Houlton of London,—the Temple marriages being nearly always, it is worth remarking, with Englishwomen, and with Englishwomen of the middle class. The first viscount sat in Parliament for East Grinstead from 1727 to 1732; for Bosney in 1734; for Weobley in 1741. His life was prolonged till the year 1757, when he died at Chelsea at the great age of eighty-four. He was succeeded by his grandson, the second viscount,—his son Henry having died before him, leaving an heir by his second wife, the daughter of Barnard, Lord Mayor of London.

The second viscount, father to the late Prime Minister, seems to have been a true Temple of the lighter and gayer Temple pattern. There are different kinds of family likenesses; in some men the graver and solidier, in others, the more brilliant aspects of the line are reproduced. Lord Palmerston was in the Admiralty from 1766 to 1777. But during the greater part of that period our Navy had little to do the doing of which could be much affected by Admiralty administration. And at the end of it, such events as Sir Peter Parker's failure before Charleston (July, 1776), were not calculated to throw a glorious light on the government under which they had been undertaken. Horace Walpole, writing to Mason in 1778, quotes, with much applause, a little sketch of Lord Palmerston, by Tickell, the grandson of Addison's friend* and a wit of that period of real merit. "Lord Palmerston," says Walpole, citing Tickell, "*finisce* (what an admirable word) rebuses and charades with chips of poetry; and when Lord of the Admiralty, like Ariel, wrecked navies with a song;—sure that is an excellent application." He is elsewhere mentioned by Walpole, as a patron of art; as a writer of verses sometimes good, sometimes bad; as a guest at Topham Beaulieu's, talking loud in the presence of Garrick, Burke, and Gibbon; as a *dilettante* of rank, in fact, with brains enough to admire brains, but not enough to be distinguished for them. A greater and an honest man than Walpole seems, however, to have liked him. "On Tuesday," writes Johnson to Boswell, in July, 1763, "I took an

* And maternal grandfather, we believe, of Mr. Roebuck.

airing to Hampstead, and dined with The Club, where Lord Palmerston was proposed, and *against my advice* rejected."^{*} But, indeed, no competent judge will deny the possession of superior talent, nay of a fine and delicate kind of talent, to the author of the following :—

INSCRIPTIVE VERSES WRITTEN BY A GENTLEMAN WHOSE LADY DIED AT
BRISTOL WELLS.

Whoe'er, like me, with trembling anguish brings,
His heart's whole treasure to fair Bristol's springs ;
Whoe'er, like me, to soothe disease and pain,
Shall pour these salutary waves in vain ;
Condemned like me to hear the faint reply,
To mark the fading cheek, the sinking eye,
From the chill brow to wipe the damp of death,
And watch with dumb despair the shortening breath ;
If chance direct him to this artless line,
Let the sad mourner know his griefs were mine.
Ordained to lose the partner of my breast,
Whose beauty warmed me, and whose friendship blest,
Framed every tie that binds the soul to prove,
Her duty friendship, and her friendship love.
Yet soon remembering that the parting sigh,
Ordains the just to slumber, not to die,
The starting tear I checked, I kissed the rod,
And not to earth resigned her, but to God.†

The second Viscount Palmerston was twice married. His first wife, a daughter of Sir Francis Poole, of Poole, in Cheshire, died leaving no issue in 1769. He married again at Bath in 1783, Miss Mary Mee, described as daughter of Benjamin Mee, Esq., of that city, who was mother of the statesman just dead. The second viscount died in Hanover Square in 1802, when little more than sixty years of age.

It is no part of our present plan to write the biography, or discuss the career, of the third Viscount Palmerston so recently taken away. To us, for our immediate purposes, he is neither a Whig nor a Tory, but a Temple,—“the last fruit off an old tree,” as Mr. Landor called his latest book—the final product of a race of English gentry. We have sketched the persons and fortunes of his house, to show that the kind of strength, and sagacity, liveliness of mind, and felicity of temperament, which made his success, were really the sources of the success of his ancestry ; and that, if he was emphatically English, it was by dint of being in his own person a bit of English history. The lesson of such a narrative will not be useless, if it helps to show how subtly one age connects itself with another, and repeats itself in another ; and how often what we are apt to think the most characteristic men and things of our own time, spring from roots deeply enmeshed in the past.

^{*} He was elected afterwards, as Boswell tells us.

† First printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May, 1777. The question of Lord Palmerston's authorship having been mooted in *Notes and Queries*, the lines were assigned to him, “on the best authority,” by Mr. Wilson Croker.